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ABSTRACT

The articles in this collection address various definitions, viewpoints, and treatments for youth at risk and youth offenders. Articles not only examine alternatives to incarceration, but also provide examples of value-forming experiences beneficial to all young people. The articles and authors are: (1) "Introduction" (Anthony Richards); (2) "The Roots of At Risk Behavior" (Brenda Robertson); (3) "Youth At-Risk for Violence and Delinquency: A Metaphor and a Definition" (B. T. McWhirter, J. Jeffries McWhirter); (4) "I'm Okay, You're At Risk: Beyond Ephebiphobia and Toward Research" (Kirk Astroth); (5) "Who Is At Risk: The System or Youth?" (Jason Bocarro); (6) "Partners in Programming: Concordia University Inner City Youth Project" (Lisa Ostiguy, Robert Hopp, Randy Swedburg); (7) "The Black Church and Youth At Risk for Incarceration" (Roger H. Rubin, Andrew Billingsley, Cleopatra Howard Caldwell); (8) "Making the Connection Between Leisure and At-Risk Youth in Today's Society" (James Calloway); (9) "Under Pressure Program: Using Live Theatre To Investigate Adolescents' Attitudes and Behavior Related to Drug and Alcohol Abuse Education and Prevention" (L. Arthur Safer, Carol Gibb Harding); (10) "Adventure Family Therapy: An Innovative Approach Answering the Question of Lasting Change with Adjudicated Youth?" (Michael A. Gass); (11) "Adolescent Female Offenders: Program Parity Is Essential to Meeting Their Needs" (Ilene R. Bergsmann); and (12) "Characteristics of Adventure Programs Valued by Adolescents in Treatment" (Jeffrey P. Witman). (KS)

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Monograph on Youth in the 1990s

Alternatives to Incarceration: Prevention or Treatment

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Issue #4, 1995

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Monograph on Youth in the 1990s

Alternatives to Incarceration: Prevention or Treatment

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Dedicated to all those readers who have teenage children

Editors' Notes

This edition of the Monograph on Youth in the 1990s is intended to be of use to professionals in the field of youth work as well as those people who are involved with making policy and being of service to young persons who are at risk. All of the authors have kindly offered their work in the spirit of wanting to improve the quality of service to youth and the quality of their lives.

Copies and details of future publications of this Monograph on Youth in the 1990s may be obtained by writing to the Youth Research Unit. There is charge of $10.00 Cd which covers the cost of mailing and printing.

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Introduction

The seeds for this edition of the Monograph were sown in the fall of 1993 at the Halifax consultation conducted by the federal government on the Canadian Young Offenders Act. It became apparent during these discussions that the problem of young offenders is not confined to finding new levels of punishment. There are as many differences among youth at risk generally and young offenders in particular as there are differences in the general population. However, creating alternatives to incarceration is not the only answer. On the other hand, creating and providing value forming experiences for all young people is essential.

The collection of articles in this issue have been selected to provide some variation in definitions, points of view, and treatment modalities. There is no intent to weight these researchers or the various programs that they represent. On the contrary, it is hoped that the reader is stimulated and even nudged into further reading in order to search for appropriate strategies to address the needs of young people in the 1990s and beyond.

The term "youth at risk" has been used to identify adolescents generally as well as specific groups who are in trouble with the law. Brenda Robertson has presented some theories on the roots of at risk behavior while Kirk Astroth has offered a detailed description of the "definition dilemma" facing researchers in the field.

There is a large range between pro-social behavior and anti-social behavior. If this range is considered on a continuum then young offenders represent only a narrow band at one end . Benedict and Jefferies McWhirter elaborate on this notion of a continuum of at riskness. This range of behaviors requires a host of different programs and treatments. To suggest that there is only one treatment for one anti-social behavior is a grave mistake. The notion of a single punishment for a specific crime has, in fact, become one of the limitations of the Young Offenders Act in Canada,

especially when the bulk of the population operates in the pro-social end of the continuum.

There have been and continue to be many treatment programs. Through careful analysis of these programs and the participants it should be possible to identify some causes and preconditions as to why young people exhibit anti-social behaviors, many of which result in criminal offences. From these data about anti-social behavior come the evidence and ideas that will help to create programs and strategies that address the issue of prevention. Why is it that the vast majority of young people do not get into trouble and are able to adopt and adapt to the appropriate pro-social behaviors, thus causing some youth to be more at risk than others?

Traditionally it has been left to the family, the church, and the school to develop the necessary pro-social behaviors. These institutions have been variously successful in differing degrees depending at what stage we are in our history. The fact remains that the formation of values, ethics and pro-social behavior is systemic in nature and not a specific and discreet subject or skill that has a set curriculum or syllabus. Therefore creating a more holistic and systemic approach to youth development may help to address the issue of reducing the number of youth who are at risk. For example Mike Gass' article advocates the use of Adventure therapy not just for the young person but the entire family. A family approach is a promising strategy for the rehabilitation of youth because of its comprehensive perspective and the opportunity it provides for continual follow up.

Leisure is an important part of a young person's life. It does not matter if the leisure is defined in terms of time, activity or a state of mind. Calloway provides a compelling argument for the need for youth workers to better understand the role of leisure as a value forming experience. Ostiguy, Hopp and Swedberg provide a very specific leisure service to youth at risk. University students not only serve as recreation activity providers and leaders, but, more important, they provide powerful role models through the activities. This model of service learning at the university/inner city level has potential for replication in cities throughout North America.

There are more males than females who are considered to be young offenders. This contributes to the treatment and prevention programs being delivered in and by a male culture. Bergsmann suggests that adolescent females who have committed offences need to be treated differently

because of their gender and the concomitant difference in their demographics and type of offence. Even though the differences in treatment and programming are appropriate there still needs to be a sense of parity and value such that neither gender is seen to receive unequal treatment. For example, she refers to the juvenile justice system continuing to be paternalistic toward females.

Many successful programs have been community based and have addressed the issues that only exist in that community. The extension of this is seen in Rubin, Billingsley and Caldwell's article which demonstrates how the Black Church provides a powerful influence and contributes to the pro-social behavior of the youth who belong. This model could easily be adapted to the age aptitude and ability of any group of youths in any community.

Various programs designed for young offenders have a "physical work" basis to them. Safer and Harding contend that there is considerable potential in the emotional/intellectual domain of drama generally and the theatre in particular. The idea of dealing with sensitive and personally destructive behaviors such as substance abuse through popular theatre has much merit. Whereas there is no case for this approach being a panacea, there is evidence that it is appropriate for some who do not respond to traditional forms of treatment and punishment.

Jason Bocarro's article highlights the fact that youth are not always at risk but rather the system itself is at risk of not serving youth adequately or appropriately. So many departments and agencies have the responsibility for youth in their mandate, yet seldom do these departments and agencies communicate with each other, let alone collaborate. The coordinated approach for both treatment and prevention is recommended for the future.

The final article in this Monograph provides an update and some sophisticated analysis of the benefits of wilderness therapy programs. There has always been an implicit belief that adventure programs, boot camps, and the use of the natural outdoors generally is of great value in treating young offenders. However, little research has been provided as to the key ingredients in these experiences which truly make a difference. Witman has provided some initial data that identifies those characteristics of adventure programming that are particularly potent and

effective. Because of this, the description of these activities may form the basis of a prescription for adventure based programming.

The purpose of this Monograph is not to provide a panacea for treatment or prevention. Rather it has been designed to create some dissonance in the reader's mind so that he/she will consider a particular treatment or prevention strategy in a more holistic way. For example, where, along the continuum, do your clients/students fit?, where does your program fit?, and is it possible to make a decision about the relative worth of prevention versus treatment?

The rapid rate of change in our society has caused a major problem for social agencies and institutions when they try to keep up or better still try to predict the change. The result is that changes to prevention programs, treatment and even punishment for young offenders has been cautious at best. The fear of being caught with the wrong program at the wrong time has been greater than the fear of maintaining the status quo. The days are passed when a successful program one year will be a successful program forever. The dilemma that many innovative youth workers will have to face is, "do I work with the notion of *not throwing the baby out with the bath water* "or do I accept the more radical approach of, "*if it ain't broke break it!*".

Anthony Richards
Coordinator
Youth Research Unit

The Roots of At Risk Behaviour

Brenda Robertson

At Risk is the new buzz word frequently used to describe today's youth. Despite its extensive use, much of the related literature doesn't define what the term means, or identify the factors that cause at risk conditions to exist. Solutions are discussed, but many of them talk about *the symptoms* rather than *the roots* of certain behaviours.

For this article, an at risk individual is one who engages in Behaviour which could lead to mental and/or physical harm to oneself and/or others. Most at risk Behaviour occurs during free time, when individuals have more control over their actions. Increasingly, however, the media is reporting incidents involving at risk behaviour at school such as violence toward teachers and fellow students, vandalism, and drug peddling.

The fact that most at risk behaviour occurs during free time should be of great concern to parks and recreation professionals. Not only is the primary mandate of the field to facilitate positive leisure experiences, but provision of recreation opportunities for at risk youth around the turn of the century was the driving force behind the establishment of the parks and recreation profession in Canada. The need for safe, supervised play spaces for youth in industrial areas characterised by crime, drunkenness, and disease lead to the establishment of the playground movement in Canada by concerned individual's such as Mabel Peters, Ethel Cartwright, and Mrs. J. Coy (McFarland, 1970).

It is interesting to note that much at risk behaviour takes place in and around recreation facilities. Recently, the evening news carried a feature story of vandalism in a Halifax city park in which pieces of

Adapted by the author from an article that appeared in Recreation Canada, 1993, 51 (4).

wooden playground equipment were doused in gasoline and set on fire. A headline-grabbing incident in 1989, which drew international attention, involved the savage attack on a jogger in Central Park, New York, by six youth who had reportedly done it for fun. Recent accounts of swarming incidents at the Eaton Centre in Toronto and Citadel National Historic Park in Halifax have been very alarming.

In order to understand such behaviour, it is necessary to examine the social and psychological factors which influence youth behaviour. Before doing so, it must be acknowledged that no two youth are exactly the same. The conditions which lead to such behaviour are complex and although an end result may be similar, the root causes differ for each individual. The basic needs which youth seek to satisfy for youth experiences include acknowledgment and acceptance of who they are, recognition for achievements, meaningful relationships with others, sensory arousal, and the ability to release stress and frustration. If access to meeting such needs through socially acceptable means is blocked, then other avenues are often sought. This is what places the individual in at risk type situations where harm to self and/or others is likely to occur. If satisfaction of needs is not actively pursued, the results include boredom, apathy, and depression which can also lead to at risk behaviour.

North American society is currently changing at a more rapid pace than at any other time in our history. Change in the foundational institutions of society such as religion, education, politics, and family structures have greatly impacted the lives of all Canadians during the past decade. The impacts of these changes are becoming apparent on a daily basis as evidenced by unemployment figures, school drop out numbers, divorce rates, crime statistics, increased alcohol and drug abuse, increased physical and sexual abuse, etc. It is not difficult to comprehend the turmoil which youth face today, given that the environment in which they are being socialised.

The following list includes a few examples of the many social and psychological factors which contribute to the at risk status of Canadian youth today. Many of the points are best illustrated by stories of incidents involving youth.

Baby Busters: The Invisible Generation

This is the title of a recent book (Barn, 1992) in which children of baby boozers have been described as having, "been overlooked in public discussion because of the exaggerated attention lavished upon the boozers". As youth is the time when identity is being formed, adolescents are seeking avenues for self expression such as fashion and music. But "busters" have been denied their chance in the media spotlight for it has focused on their parents rather than themselves. Boozer fashion dominates magazine covers, boomer shows such as Thirty *Something* and *Murphy Brown* dominate the prime time television schedules, and Blasts from the Past or Songs from the Sixties dominate the radio waves. Youth are forced to pursue the extreme in order to attract media attention. Vandalism, swarming, and train surfing make the news.

Changing Family Structures

Every day, thousands of families are being torn apart by separation and divorce. Often, the true impact is realised only by the participant.

Billy was eleven when his parents divorced. In addition to losing regular association with his father, the loss of half of the family income meant he had to quit the hockey team which he considered to be the most important thing in his life at the time. Not only did he miss playing the game, he missed the personal support which he had experienced from coaches and team mates at the time he needed them most.

Over programming

Although lack of opportunity is often recognised as a contributing factor to at risk behaviour, in other cases children are often over programmed either through a parent wishing to have their child experience it all or in an attempt to accommodate the lifestyles of working parents.

Elizabeth, who is 14, has her own horse which she rides every day after school. during the winter she plays basketball and in the summer is on

two soccer teams. Summer weekends are booked with soccer tournaments and horse shows, often with both occurring simultaneously but 100km apart. Elizabeth is also a Pathfinder, member of the local pony club, takes swimming lessons, belongs to a private recreation/fitness centre, and enjoys going to the movies, bowling, and dances on weekend nights. Her home which is in easy and safe walking distance of all of the town facilities, has an outdoor basketball court, computers, VCR, family library, and thousands of dollars worth of games and sports equipment. When Elizabeth is at home for more than an hour without a programmed activity she experiences boredom and the desire for "something to do".

Lack of Challenge

Some youth do not find routine activities to be challenging. Both educational and recreational activities are often designed to the level of the mean. Those below the mean often become frustrated by their inability to achieve success and as a result drop out. In both cases, individuals seek to satisfy their needs through participation in activities which better match their ability level.

Thad is a talented and gifted student, both in terms of his school work and physical abilities. With very little effort he is the top student in his school and the star of numerous school sports teams. In order for Thad to access the degree of challenge he was seeking, he needed to control the experience. One activity which he found matched his mental and physical abilities was to gain access to the ventilation system of the local university and to "visit" various facilities at night including the rare book room at the library, the science laboratories, and the President's office.

Cultural Insensitivity

Many structured programs and services offered in Canada are designed and implemented by the white middle class individuals with that perspective being reflected in the activity. The result is that often such programs and services do not meet the needs of other segments of the population.

Shawn is a member of the First Nations. Viewing his people through "white eyes" caused great confusion for him. In school he was offended by much of the school content he was forced to learn and accept. This was particularly true in history when the class was taught how the white man discovered and settled North America with denial of the role that his forefathers played in the development of the country. Such experiences led Shawn to resent white people.

Conflicting Values

Value clashes between parents and children are not new. A major source of stress for youth today is the conflicting messages that society gives them. Values which were once held to be sacred are being challenged and debated in the public forum. Youth are receiving conflicting messages about such issues as abortion, sexuality, and women's rights. When youth adopt views which are accepted by a major segment of society, but which conflict with those of their parents, it is extremely stressful for both.

Laura was very studious for which she has received top grades. She was well rounded through her participation in soccer, swimming, girl guides, the speech team and local theatre. She was the president of her church youth group and wrote articles for a nationwide church magazine. Laura always did her chores without being asked. She and her parents, both professors, shared many interesting dinner-time conversations. Conflict arose when Laura did not want to date or attend school dances. Shortly after graduating at the top of her class, Laura attempted to commit suicide. She could not reconcile her personal feelings with her parents' strong belief that homosexuals were evil people. She saw no other way to relieve the pain she experienced from her deep internal conflict.

Concern over the future

Youth are concerned about many issues. Aids, the environment, child abuse, drugs, teen suicide, the economy, and racial discrimination are the major concerns of Canadian youth according to a study of 3500 Canadian young people (Bibby & Posterski, 1992). The report describes youth today as

the "crisis generation". The findings indicate that far greater numbers of youth are very troubled by the issues than had been indicated in previous studies.

Violence

It is very difficult, especially for young people, to escape violence in society today. Forms of violence experienced in the home include television, video games, reading materials, and treatment by an abusive parent. At school, students are exposed to acts of aggression by other students and in some cases teachers. Violence is the dominant theme in many major motion pictures including the recent box office hit *Jurassic Park* which many attended anticipating a dinosaur tale featuring lovable dino-type characters.

Data from a recent study (Bibby & Posterski, 1992) of Canadian youth reveal that forty-two percent of Canadian youth personally know someone who has been a victim of physical abuse in the home. Thirty-nine percent personally know someone who has been a victim of violence in school. Fifty-eight percent personally know someone who has tried to commit suicide. Consistent exposure to violence is a major source of stress to many young people. To others, it becomes a blueprint for action.

Entitlement

Various feminist authors have written recently about lack of entitlement as being a constraint to leisure for women (Henderson et al., 1989). Little research has focused on why women feel a lack of a sense of entitlement to leisure or how it might affect girls.

Recently, a small town soccer club distributed posters announced the details of a youth soccer program. The lack of turn out by girls was taken as an indication of their lack of interest, and the all-male leagues proceeded. Some time later it came to light that the picture on the poster showed only males, and that was the message which the girls in the community received.

Over regulation

Freedom is generally recognised as a major component of leisure, yet youth are constantly bombarded with rules and regulations which limit freedom. Often in an attempt to control safety, recreation providers remove the components inherent in an activity which makes it desirable.

Tom used to be a compulsive skateboarder who never went anywhere without his board. He was a responsible youth, who always conducted his activity in such a manner as to not cause harm to anyone or anything. He avoided busy areas of town where there was pedestrian or automobile traffic. Over a period of a few months, town council passed a series of regulations which restricted skateboarding in most areas of town and to certain times of the day, imposed a mandatory helmet regulation, and established a set of stiff fines. Within a few days, most skateboarders had their boards confiscated by town police. The town did, however, agree to build a skateboarding ramp which they did in a very undesirable part of town. Since the youth were not consulted, the ramp was built in such a way that it did not meet the needs of most potential participants. Tom gave up skateboarding and unable to find a socially acceptable alternative activity, turned to delinquent activity which he could engage in without external restriction being imposed upon him.

Opportunity availability

In many cases, opportunities to meet the needs of young people do not exist. In other cases, there are opportunities but they are designed to serve the interests of the organisers more than those of the participants.

Andy was a top student in school and a nationally-ranked athlete. On Friday evenings, he would attend dances with his friends for something to do. Generally, the dances ended before midnight, and before Andy and friends were ready to call it a night. In the absence of other opportunities available at that time of the night, they set out to organise their own. Requests to the town for access to sport facilities to play basketball was repeatedly denied. They played on an outdoor court using their own equipment until neighbours complained and they were banned from the area. In the alternative, they turned to delinquent activity such as

vandalism or sitting on the airport runway, beyond the last set of lights and having airplanes fly a few feet over their heads. They found these to be very exciting and accessible activities.

Anomie

The theory of anomie relates to strain which is caused when an individual cannot meet culturally prescribed goals through institutional means. The imbalance between the goals and means of attainment cause frustration which may lead to at risk behaviour.

As a single parent, Mark's mother worked in a bar until 2:00am in order to support them, leaving him home alone. As a result, he became self sufficient by age ten and often stole things he wanted or needed. He missed not having a more stable family and home environment. As a result, he would scout out the nice homes in the neighbourhoods around town. When it appeared that someone had left on vacation, he and a friend would break into the house and pretend they were the owners. They would sleep in the beds, watch television, and cook meals. They considered this to be very exciting for they never knew when the resident would return. Mark considered these experiences to be his "vacation" and a means by which to access the lifestyle he desired if only for a brief time.

The aforementioned are only a few examples of the types of factors influencing the lives and decisions of Canadian youth. The impacts of situations such as those which have been described are varied. For many, bonds to the institutions are broken or in some cases never formed. As such, culturally prescribed values hold little meaning for young people who do not respect the society which the values represent.

Often, at risk behaviour is the result of an individual attempting to achieve a particular goal in the best known way possible. Behaviour which is potentially harmful to oneself or others is not preferable but is seen as the only alternative.

Many of the factors which facilitate at risk behaviour are complex and not easily addressed. If problems are continued to be considered the responsibility of youth and the participants in at risk behaviour to be "bad kids", then the issues will never be addressed successfully. Society needs to

view young people as products of their environment and as such look to root causes not in the youth, but rather in the broader society.

Many cultures and societies accept a communal responsibility for the raising of children. In North America, however, parents are generally awarded full responsibility for the task. When youth venture forth, they are often met with suspicion, intolerance, and hostility rather than being embraced by the community. This is particularly difficult for those who lack a supportive home environment, and for those from minority backgrounds.

Many communities today exist in the legal rather than the philosophical sense. For a variety of reasons youth often do not feel part of society, a family, or a community. As members of communities, be that geographical or a community of interest, we must accept some responsibility for our youth. Rather than looking externally at what can be done to change the behaviour of young people, we must first look internally for ways to make the change.

The following are strategies which can be employed to address the factors which cause youth to be at risk.

- Don't think of youth today from your dated personal perspective. A great deal has changed in the world in the past few years creating new issues and concerns for young people. It is important to know the youth in your jurisdiction and to understand life from their perspective.

- Part of this knowledge is understanding the diversity which exists and particular conditions related to race, gender, sexuality, ability levels, religion, etc. Be on the constant lookout for factors which may exclude certain individuals from certain opportunities. It is important for those within the recreation field to understand and embrace diversity.

- Keep abreast of emerging trends which may impact youth. A few years ago, not many people had heard of AIDS. Today it is the number one social concern of youth. Understanding the trends can help you plan accordingly.

- When new youth-oriented activities evolve, endeavour to understand why. There is always an underlying need being met through any

activity which the youth themselves develop, a need not met through your offerings.

- Become a leisure educator. Parents, schools, and churches were once the primary sources of leisure education for youth. Today these are being replaced by peers, television, and music. Many youth lack the basic skills, knowledge, and attitude to access many of the socially acceptable forms of leisure pursuit. Youth are faced with many social and psychological constraints which they must be taught to overcome. Often parents lack the knowledge to be effective leisure educators, and many schools are cutting programs such as physical education, music, and drama which are designed to provide youth with basic leisure skills.

- Related to the previous item is the need for recreation providers to become youth leisure advocates. This includes accepting responsibility to get involved in debates with schools over cutting leisure-related programs, or with police over the regulation of skateboarding, or with justice officials over the provision of leisure education in youth detention centres. Constantly be on the lookout for opportunities to champion youth causes in your community.

- Ensure that program offerings are designed in such a way to accommodate a variety of skill and challenge levels. Activities designed to satisfy the mean more often than not satisfy very few. Be aware of the needs which youth are seeking to satisfy through a particular activity and modify accordingly. This includes provision of programs at times and places appropriate to the youth.

- Last, but not least, work with youth. Opportunities designed for youth, without their perspective are doomed to failure. Neither can all aspects of program design be delegated to youth. The ideal arrangement is for youth to take an active role in facilitating their own experiences with the professional available to assist where necessary. Youth must feel the support but not the pressure.

In order to work successfully to change the at risk status of youth, the philosophy of communal responsibility for raising youth must be paramount. This means that youth must often be dealt with on their terms. This work involves challenges, occasional failure and willingness for both youth and youth workers to operate outside of this personal comfort zone. It

must also be recognised that some of the greatest potential and resources are within the youth themselves.

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Youth at-Risk for Violence and Delinquency: A Metaphor and a Definition

B. T. McWhirter & J. Jeffries McWhirter

Abstract

Although the term at-risk youth is widely used in psychological, educational, criminal justice, and other literature, its current usage lacks consistency and conceptual clarity. In this article we respond to this pervasive problem by providing a working definition of the term at-risk. We then present a metaphor to provide a unified and consistent conceptual framework for understanding this definition and the issues faced by young people at-risk. We also discuss two specific conceptual aspects of the term at-risk that need to be considered in its definition and usage: (a) it has a future orientation and (b) it represents a continuum. Throughout our discussion, we integrate examples of how this metaphor and elements of its definition might be applied to youth at-risk for delinquency and violence.

The term at-risk appears frequently in educational, psychological, medical, social work, economic, and business literature. The term also appears in the legislative mandates of various U.S. states and in federal government and national reports, and has been used in Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. Since 1983 (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983), the term has been used with increasing frequency and is at least partially synonymous with "troubled" and "delinquent." The word provides a popular and useful descriptor for the many young people in society who have limited potential for becoming responsible and productive adults because they have a high probability (i.e., are at high risk) of encountering problems at home, in school, or in their communities (Capuzzi & Gross, 1989). Of particular importance here is that the concept is applied to youth engaged (or potentially engaged) in delinquency, gang membership, and violence.

Unfortunately, multiple uses and various meanings of the term at-risk have resulted in a lack of conceptual clarity. This lack of clarity creates problems for researchers and practitioners alike. In this article we define the term at-risk. We then present a metaphor that is helpful in providing a unified and consistent conceptual framework for understanding and addressing at-risk youth (J.J. McWhirter & E.H. McWhirter, 1989). The metaphor pulls together information and knowledge that is disorganized, provides focus on specific categories of behavior, and emphasizes certain aspects of at-risk youth that are frequently ignored in the literature. Later, we discuss two specific conceptual aspects of the term at-risk that need to be considered in its definition and usage: that it is future oriented, and that it is a continuum. Throughout our discussion, we integrate examples of how this metaphor and elements of its definition might be applied to youth at-risk for delinquency and violence.

Definition of At-Risk

We use the term at-risk to denote a set of apparent cause and effect dynamics that place the child or adolescent in potential danger of future negative events. At-risk designates a situation or condition that is not necessarily current but that can be anticipated in the absence of intervention (J.J. McWhirter, B.T. McWhirter, A.M. McWhirter, & E.H. McWhirter, 1993; 1994). For example, children who are parented with negative, aggressive, and inconsistent discipline, who do poorly in school or have inadequate resources at school, and who have limited skills in eliciting positive responses from adults and peers are at-risk for conduct disorders. Youngsters with conduct disorders are at-risk for antisocial behavior. Children and adolescents who exhibit antisocial behavior are at-risk for delinquency. Thus, a specific behavior, attitude, or deficiency (or excess) provides an initial marker of later problem behavior in the absence of intervention.

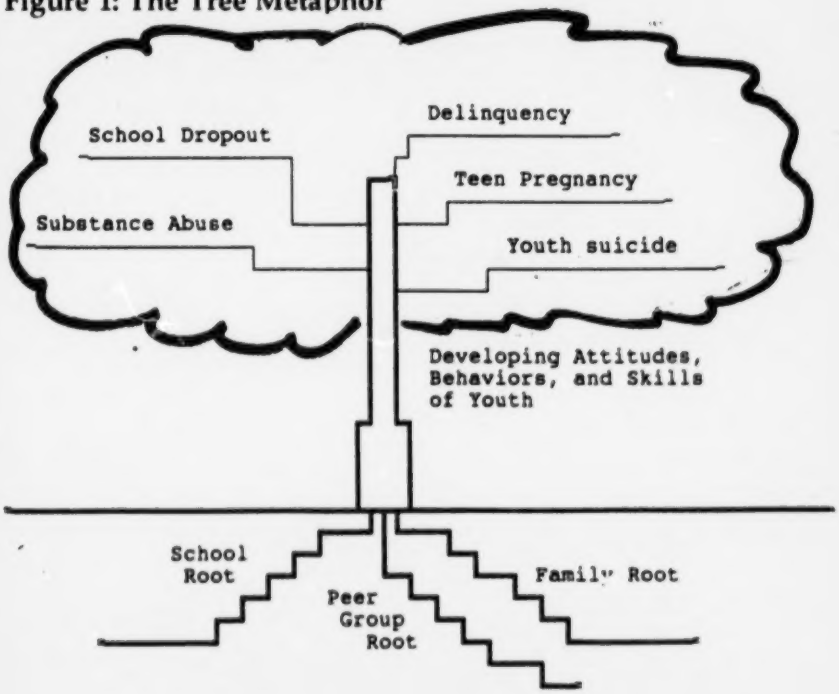
The following metaphor provides an organizational framework for discussing the term at-risk and clarifying this definition.

The At-Risk Tree: A Metaphor

By using the analogy of a tree, we can consider a range of issues that relate to at-risk youth (see Figure 1). The soil of the tree is the societal

environment. The roots of family, school, and peer group connect the tree to the soil (i.e., environment) to provide sustenance and nurturance. The trunk serves as support and as the conduit of developing attitudes, behaviors, and skills within youth. This conduit leads to specific categories of behavior that are the branches of the tree, such as delinquency. To extend the analogy, educators, mental health, and criminal justice professionals are gardeners who must prune and repair weak and broken branches. They also tend to underdeveloped and deficient fruit, that is, specific youngsters at-risk.

Figure 1: The Tree Metaphor



The Soil

Various aspects of the environment such as socioeconomic status, political and economic climate, culture and community norms, and technology must be considered in order to fully understand at-risk issues. The environment/soil also includes the dramatic changes that are occurring in society. Urbanization, feminization of poverty, and technological change that impacts employment are part of the soil in which youth are or are not nourished. These complex variables interact with and influence the personal development of the child and adolescent (Namir & Weinstein, 1982). Economic and social factors are also important. For example, low socioeconomic status within the family, limited access to health and mental health services, employment changes, and influences related to racism and sexism are all forms of environmental pressure that mold the family and influence the school. This environment, this soil, contributes to at-risk products: children and youth at-risk (Schorr, 1988).

The Roots

The at-risk tree has three primary roots: family, school, and peer group. For an actual tree the roots provide a network that anchors the tree and provides sustenance. So too, families, schools, and peer groups, are the primary social agents that transmit culture and values and mediate young people's development. The family and school provide the structures through which individuals assimilate their experiences. The peer group, and especially the peer cluster (Oetting & Beauvais, 1986, 1987) reify and underline them.

The family is the tap root. Family conflict, friction, and differing parenting styles contribute to young people's dysfunction. So too, parental anger, hostility, depression, and anxiety limit the nurturance and support given to children. In multi-problem families, youngsters are at greater risk.

The school system is another major root. Society expects the education system to help provide a secure environment for children and to encourage appropriate learning experiences for young people. Schools are also expected to attend to emotional problems of children and youth. Increasingly, schools must directly teach essential life skills that were previously taught by families and churches (Gazda, 1989). When the soil is poor and the tap root weak, the role of the school in children's future is

even more important. How the school handles at-risk students' situations has both short- and long-term effects on their attitudes toward school, learning, and life.

The peer group is another important root although its major influence is felt later in a young person's life. Evidence is mounting to suggest that rejection by and of low-risk peers (Patterson, DeBaryshe, & Ramsey, 1989) and involvement with a deviant peer cluster (Oetting & Beauvais, 1986, 1987) are major contributors to antisocial behavior, delinquency, gang membership, and youth violence.

The Trunk

In an actual tree the trunk is the support and brace for the branches. The trunk is also the conduit between the soil and roots through the branches up to the leaves, flowers, and fruit. Metaphorically, the trunk of the at-risk tree represents behaviors, attitudes, and skills of specific youngsters. The trunk also represents young people's strengths and weaknesses, likes and dislikes, talents and disabilities. These personal characteristics spring from the soil of the environment and are transmitted and modified through the roots of family, school, and peer group. They are also a conduit to the branches because specific characteristics such as inability to delay gratification, depression and anxiety, and low self-esteem, lead directly to the category behavior that is represented by the branches.

The Branches

The branches of the tree represent young people's adaptation to society. Some adapt to society by developing behaviors that thrust them together into clusters (i.e., "branches") of specific at-risk groups. While there are many branches, those that produce the most damaged fruit are: school dropout, substance abuse, delinquency, teen pregnancy, and youth suicide (see figure 1). Juvenile delinquency is of particular importance here and includes gang involvement, crime, and youth violence. These branches are defective, broken, and deficient and they yield youth who are troubled and challenged (J.J. McWhirter, B.T. McWhirter, A.M. McWhirter, & E.H. McWhirter, 1993).

Foliage, Fruit, and Flowers

The fruit of the tree represents specific youngsters. Many young people are whole and healthy and are themselves capable of bearing good fruit; others are bruised and damaged. Some of these drop from the tree. Broken branches sometimes produce good fruit; healthy branches sometimes produce damaged fruit. But certain categories increase the probability that the "fruit" will be a waste. Perhaps even more tragic is the reality that at-risk youth are themselves often the seeds of future generations of at-risk trees.

The Gardener

To continue the analogy, growing trees need adequate sun, water, and nurturing; they need pruning, staking, and trimming. Hence, educators, mental health, and criminal justice professionals are gardeners. Like any good gardener, they nurture the plant. Sometimes their nurturing is directed toward the soil, sometimes toward the roots; sometimes they support the trunk, prop the branches, or work with the fruit. In working with at-risk young people, educators, mental health, and criminal justice professionals sometimes provide remediation and second chance opportunities; sometimes they work to build up cognitive and social skill deficits; sometimes they counsel and consult with families and school personnel; and sometimes they encourage empowerment and social activism to change the environment (Dryfoos, 1990; J.J. McWhirter & E.H. McWhirter, 1989; E.H. McWhirter, 1994).

Conceptual Issues in the Definition of At-Risk

The metaphor of the at-risk tree integrates the definitional issues presented next. Both the futuristic aspect of the term at-risk and the concept of a continuum of situations, attitudes, and behaviors that are inherent in the definition are concepts embedded in the metaphor.

At-Risk and Future Problems

The term at-risk literally implies an element of prediction. Unfortunately, the developmental and preventive components of the term

are frequently minimized or ignored. Too often, the term is used as a discrete and concrete label for a present condition or problem requiring present treatment. The importance of this time dimension is critical for school, mental health, and criminal justice professionals especially because it has such important implications for prevention and early intervention approaches. Thus, the term at-risk always denotes a set of presumed cause and effect dynamics that place the individual child or adolescent in danger of negative future events. For example, youngsters who associate with deviant peers are at-risk for being delinquent. Young people who are delinquent are at-risk for engaging in more organized gang activity. Children and adolescents who are in gangs are at-risk for an adulthood of criminal and other deviant behavior. Thus, specific behaviors, attitudes, or deficiencies provide an initial marker of later problem behavior. Consequently, the term at-risk is viewed not so much as a current situation, although it is sometimes used in that way, but rather an anticipated potential.

At-Risk as a Continuum

In addition to the future connotation of the term, at-riskness must be viewed not so much as a discrete and unitary position but rather as a series of steps along a continuum, culminating in "category activity," which refers to participation in one or more destructive behaviors such as drug use, irresponsible sexual activity, gang involvement, delinquent activity, or other negative behaviors. Figure 2 illustrates the continuum from minimal- and remote-risk to individual, personal behavior that anticipates imminent-risk and, finally, precipitates category activity.

Minimal Risk

Young people who come from healthy economic backgrounds, who have limited psychosocial stressors and good schools, and who have loving, caring family, peer, and social relationships are assumed to have minimal risk for future problems. The concept of minimal-risk is used rather than no-risk because there are no guarantees. All children are potentially at-risk for problems. Young people have family members who die, lose their source of livelihood, divorce, or become emotionally unstable and unreliable. These stressors and others can occur at any time. Depending on age, developmental level, personal characteristics, family and

Figure 2: The at-risk continuum

Minimal-Risk	Remote-Risk	High-Risk	Imminent-Risk	Category Activity
Favorable demographics	Negative demographics	Negative demographics	Negative demographics	Negative demographics
Positive family, school, and social interaction	Less positive family, school, & social interaction	Negative family, school, and social interaction	Negative family, school, and social interaction	Negative family, school, and social interaction
Limited psycho-social and environmental stressors	Some stressors	Numerous stressors	Numerous stressors	At-risk for more intense maladaptive behavior
		Development of personal at-risk markers: Negative attitudes and emotions, & skill deficiencies	Development of personal at-risk markers: Negative attitudes and emotions, & skill deficiencies	Young person's activity places him or her solidly in the at-risk category
			Development of gateway behaviors and activities	At-risk for other categories
				Young person's children will be at-risk

community resources, and a host of other factors, young people might face long-range negative consequences. Neither favorable demographics nor "good" families and schools guarantee invulnerability. Youngsters from every social class reject positive adult values and norms. Further, neither money, social status, popularity, nor "the good life" guarantees meaning and purpose in life. Finally, successful, "good" families may harbor alcoholic parents; mask sexual, emotional, and physical abuse; or produce depression and anxiety. Delinquency and other risky behaviors can be the result.

Remote-Risk

This point on the continuum occurs when demographic, family, school, and social markers of future problems are present. Due to factors such as social discrepancies between the dominant culture and the cultures of people of color, pervasive covert and overt racism, and the differential access to resources that is inherent with economic stratification, demographic variables, such as minority group membership and low socioeconomic status, are statistically predictive of dropout, drug abuse, teen pregnancy, delinquency, and so forth (Schorr, 1988). Less positive family, school, and social interactions and increased psychosocial stressors (e.g., parental divorce or death, family income loss) also provide distant markers for potential problems. These factors are compounded when the individual youth expresses high-risk characteristics, such as an inability to delay gratification. The greater number of these factors that youngsters experience places them further along on the at-risk continuum. Of course, African American, Latino, Native American and other young people of color who experience poverty, difficult family circumstances, and substandard schools do live healthy, productive lives. Thus, while background factors are important, they predict risk for an individual child in only a remote way.

High-Risk

Numerous psychosocial stressors and dysfunctional family, school, and social interactions contribute to risk. The underlying negative attitudes and emotions that a young person develops are the keys to this point on the continuum. Skill deficiencies, along with depression, anxiety, and aggression are high-risk characteristics. These individual markers are

especially important as one moves along the continuum from minimal-risk to specific category activity. These markers signal the internalization of the problem; they set the stage for participation in specific gateway behaviors that especially signal future deviant behavior.

Imminent-Risk

Internalized high-risk characteristics often find expression through participation in individual gateway behaviors. Gateway behaviors involve the child's participation in mildly or moderately destructive activities. More importantly, gateway behaviors potentially signal more deviant behavior to follow. For example, a child's aggression toward other children and adults is gateway behavior to antisocial behavior. Antisocial behavior is gateway to conduct disorder and to hostility, and so forth. While the path through the gates is not entirely predictable, the youngster's behavior makes him or her imminently at-risk.

Category Activity

This final step of the continuum involves the participation by the young person in those activities that define the categories. This point on the continuum illustrates the conceptual problem with the term at-risk. The literature in this area continues to use the term at-risk to refer to youngsters already engaged in destructive behaviors, such as delinquent youth. On the one hand, this is not an at-risk point at all since the young person already exhibits maladaptive, category behaviors. He or she already has the problem. On the other hand, activity in any at-risk category can become even more severe. The young person with conduct disorder can become even more antisocial; the delinquent can participate in more violent crime. Category activity by the adolescent can lead to a lifetime involvement in crime by the adult. Further, individuals who participate in one category activity continue to be at-risk for the other categories: for instance, youth who are delinquent may participate in illicit drug activity.

Education, mental health, and criminal justice professionals' use of the term at-risk must include both this future time dimension and the continuum of situations and behaviors. Additionally, the term at-risk can

be understood through the use of the tree metaphor that provides a conceptual and organizational framework. Utilizing both the tree metaphor and important conceptual aspects of the term at-risk adds clarity and focus in understanding the term and the experiences of young people, and offers potential for providing appropriate and effective preventive interventions for youth at-risk for a variety of life problems.

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I'm O.K., You're at Risk: Beyond Ephebiphobia and Toward Research

Kirk Astroth

In speaking about the West, Wallace Stegner (1969) wrote in *The Sound of Mountain Water* that this region, "is the native home of hope". Since then, others have also discovered an uplifting, optimistic nature in those who live in the West. Peter Hart (1983, p. 2), a political pollster, observed that "polls in the Western states show the region's residents to be more optimistic and possess more of a 'can do' attitude than people in any other region". Somehow, he suggests, our spectacular vistas and open spaces encourage a more hopeful attitude. Perhaps it is this heritage which helps explain my unique perspective on today's so-called "youth crisis" and the focus of this article.

In the discussion about today's teens, portrayal of youth problems in balance and context has vanished. As a result, youth policy and youth programming are increasingly divorced from research findings, historical lessons, and common sense. To a large extent, many of us in youth development education have simply repeated the popular myths circulating in the media about "at risk" youth without questioning the accuracy of these statements or using research to help us discern the true situation of today's youth. It's time to re-evaluate our focus on "youth at risk" by looking at the research.

Some authorities maintain that today, "all youth are born at high risk" (Glenn & Nelsen, 1988, p. 49). Others, like Dryfoos (1990), estimate that one-quarter of our 10-17 year olds are "high risk" and that an additional 25% are at moderate risk. Males (1992) and Lewis (1992) on the other hand, argue that today's teens are doing well in comparison to previous generations and that only a small percentage are "at risk" for life failures. Given the disagreement among experts (there is even lack of consensus about whether youth are at risk or whether they live in at risk environments), some people have good reason to question whether the

health of American teens is as bad as some claim. Moreover, many have good cause to wonder if the statistics used to document teen problems provide an accurate picture of today's teens. Are today's youth really so different from previous generations or so different from today's adults? I don't believe they are.

Given the barrage of adolescent problems displayed in the media, it should probably be a surprise to learn that today's U.S. teenagers are healthier, better educated, basically optimistic, and more responsible by nearly every important measure than teens of the past (Keith, Hoopfer & Nelson, 1985). The Iowa Youth Poll (1991), for example, demonstrated that most youth feel satisfied with their lives and generally positive about themselves.

The truth is that the situation for *the majority* of youth across the nation is improving— including African–American youth. For example, while high school completion rates have remained largely unchanged for most other groups during the past 20 years, black student completion rates have increased by 10 percent. Moreover, black drop–outs are more likely than members of any other group to have returned to school within four years. Black students have also been steadily narrowing the gap between themselves and white students in math and science proficiency. Between 1976 and 1992 the mean scores for black students on the SAT rose 20 points on the verbal section and 31 points on the math section (U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 1992). Black students are also much less likely to engage in alcohol and drug use—and more likely to engage in community service— than youth members of other racial groups. Yet, this is far from the usual picture one gets from most reports.

Not only are today's teens healthier than teens of the past, but today's teens are typically *more* healthy than adults who seem so ready to identify them as "at risk". Never before have teenagers been *less* likely to die from disease; never before have more been enrolled in or graduated from educational institutions (The National Education Goals Report, 1992); never have fewer been forced out of school by injury, sickness, poverty, handicap, early pregnancy, or social disadvantage; never before has their projected life span been longer. As Lewis (1992, p. 196) points out, this is an important story that is not being told yet "the facts are easily accessible from sources that anyone can find in the library..."

Like previous generations of adults, we appear to be suffering from a reoccurring bout of what I call **ephebiphobia** (derived from the Greek term which loosely translates as a fear and loathing toward adolescents). A study of history reveals that nearly every generation of young people has been chastised as "out of control" or aberrant in some way. Alarmist statements about the younger generation can be found in the 1930's, 40's, 50's and certainly in the 1960's. For example, the cover of a 1954 issue of *Newsweek* blared: "Let's Face It: Our Teen-Agers Are Out of Control". The article laments a "national teen-age problem--a problem that is apparently getting worse." And why? "There's too much divorce, too few normal homes," claimed one sociologist. Others denounced "salacious, sadistic comic books" (Newsweek, 1954, p.43). Today, we might try to blame rock-n-roll, MTV or heavy metal music. Yet few explanations rely on research to inform their investigations or their solutions.

Unfortunately, "youth at risk" is becoming a lens through which all young people are viewed so that adolescence itself is seen today as some awful, incurable disease. Indeed, it would appear that troubled youth are not the exception but rather have become the dysfunctional rule. As Lofquist (1992) observes, our reliance on a deficit-focused, diagnosed problem model to frame youth behavior has fostered an overly negative perspective and a limited vision. Typically, our response is a punitive one advocating that we "lock 'em up" for a while as some misconceived cure-all. Yet, incarcerating young people (or even adults) does little to address the underlying causes and consequences. After serving his or her time in jail, we still have a person with whom we have to deal socially, emotionally, and physically.

Young people today are typically portrayed as some aberrant and pariah class which suffers its own distinct "epidemics" that are different from behaviors of previous generations and that certainly bear no relationship to adult patterns of behavior. Yet, an early survey of teenage drinking patterns in the 1950's also describes patterns that are the same as those of teens today (Better Homes and Gardens, 1954). Moreover, unwed pregnancy rates are lower for teens than for any other age group *except* for women over the age of 35 (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 1990). As astonishing as it may sound, today's teens lead healthier lives than even most young and middle-aged adults—lower rates of suicide, violent death, unwed pregnancy, drug abuse, smoking, and drunken driving. And where youth problems do occur, adult influence is direct (O'Neil, 1991). For example, the Education Commission of the States recently examined

preventable conditions associated with children's development of learning problems: low birth weight, maternal smoking, prenatal alcohol and/or drug exposure, child abuse and neglect--all factors which are related to adult behaviors. Yet, this is not the picture of today's young people presented to the public.

To illustrate the point that we've become overly negative about the current generation of young people, let's look at a couple of areas. First, let's look at youth gang involvement. Despite a barrage of media attention, today's youth are no more likely to be involved in gang activities. In cities like Los Angeles, estimates are that only 5–10% of all young people are involved in gangs. "Even in the most heavily gang–infested neighborhoods, the majority of young people are *not* gang–affiliated" (Prothrow-Stith & Weissman, 1991, p. 104). As Prothrow–Stith observes: the failure of the mass media to accurately portray gang activity has existed for decades—long before *West Side Story*. Gang activity has changed little over time, but what has changed is the amount of attention editors—and thus the public—have paid to it. As one researcher commented: "There seems to be a desperate need to confirm community fears of gang violence" (Clay & Aquila, 1994, p. 66).

Our pathological treatment of youth is also manifest in another trend. Since 1980, teen psychiatric admissions have increased 250 to 400 percent, but as one observer notes "it's not because teens are suddenly so much crazier than they were a decade ago" (Lamb, 1992, pp. 38-39). The Children's Defence Fund has suggested that at least 40% of these juvenile admissions are inappropriate. According to Professor Ira Schwartz of the University of Minnesota, the figure may be closer to 50 percent. Such premature institutionalization could be the result of parents' inability to deal with normal adolescent behavior and may also violate the civil rights of young people (Metz, 1991).

Teen pregnancy is another area where today's youth are portrayed as amoral and permissive. Yet, in Montana, for example, nearly 60 percent of Montana's so–called 'teen' pregnancies are caused by men over the age of 21 (Montana Department of Health and Environmental Sciences, 1991). Only 1.5% of all pregnancies in the U.S. and only 8% of all "teenage" pregnancies actually involve two minors (children). Only 29% of all "teen" pregnancies actually involve two teenagers (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 1990). The most important thing adults can do about

the "epidemic of teen pregnancy" in Montana and other states is to stop causing it.

Let's also examine teen suicide. The oft–quoted figure frequently cited to dramatize this epidemic is that annually nearly 6,000 teens kill themselves and that suicide has tripled (or quadrupled, depending on who you read) since the 1950's. What does the research data say?

First, we have to clarify a definitional question: who is a teenager? Federal data for 1990 shows 13.6 suicides per 100,000 population for people ages 15–24. And the frequently cited "teen" suicide rate of 6,000 comes from this same age group—a group which includes more than just teens. The first step in understanding "teen" suicide is to clearly identify who is being included in the teen category. If we are really going to be accurate when we discuss "teen" suicide, we should be looking at the suicide rate for 13–19 year olds, not 15–24 year olds. Vital statistics data shows that the suicide rate for 10–19 year olds is about 10 per 100,000, one of the lowest for most age groups (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 1990, pp.300-301). More teens die each year from cancer (13 per 100,000) than from suicide.

What we also fail to ask is how this rate compares to other age groups. While I don't want to minimize the tragedy of any deaths, especially teen suicides, I want us to put the issue in perspective and cease from needlessly alarming communities about a "teen suicide epidemic". If we are truly concerned about high suicide rates, we should be devoting more attention to other age groups, not teens. Senior citizens over the age of 85 have a suicide rate of 22.5 per 100,000— two and a half times the rate for 10–19 year olds. Those 75–84 have a suicide rate of 26.1 per 100,000. Those 65–74 years of age have a suicide rate of 18.1 per 100,000 (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 1990, pp.300-301). And rates for Americans 65 and older rose 21% from 1980 to 1986. Who's at risk?

The reality is that teens as a whole are *less likely* to commit suicide than any age group *except* pre–teens. In fact, Montana's teen suicide rate is *not* rising, and youth suicide levels and trends appear to mirror the trends of adult suicide, at both the family and cultural level. What has changed, though, is our honesty about how teens die. Many firearms deaths during the 1950's which were classified as "accidental" are now accurately listed as suicides. The so–called tripling of the teen suicide rate is more a function of our honesty in classifying teen deaths than it is a indictment of

overall teen health. Occupational surveys consistently show that parents and teachers are twice as likely, counsellors and psychologists are four times more likely, and school administrators are six times more likely to commit suicide than are high school students. A teen today is more justified in worrying that a parent, adult relative, teacher or counsellor will commit suicide than the other way around. Yet we do not question the health of all grown-ups as a result.

So, what does this mean for youth development professionals who seemingly have bought into the "at risk" model? First, we must move away from a deficit-focused, linear diagnosed problem model and move toward a condition-focused, resiliency model which recognizes and supports the basic vitality and strength of all young people. Sadly, the predominant "at risk" model which characterizes most or all youths as "at risk" scatters valuable resources and dilutes efforts to help the minority of youths who are genuinely troubled.

Second, what I want to urge is that we really check the data, especially for our own communities, before we succumb to the national mythology that all youth are at risk. Broad generalizations such as these take away from targeted efforts which should address real—not perceived—problems in local communities. Let's make sure we base our actions on research. Clearly, we should not allow a sense of complacency to develop because of the data that I have presented on teen health. That's not why I've gathered them together—which leads to my next caution.

Third, let's also be careful about the messages we send to our young people. Tragically, unwarranted pessimism about one's generation, reinforced by a barrage of negative and false publicity about youth, can damage the confidence young people have in themselves and their future. Inherent in worthwhile efforts to prevent teen problems should be the respect for the stability of our teenage population as a whole. Terrifying parents, alarming legislators, communities, and youth themselves with nonsense such as "all teens are at risk" does an injustice to the vast majority of teens who do not deserve a reputation for self-destructiveness. In truth, beneath the national barrage of "youth problems" is a story of hope and determination in the face of challenging conditions. If we want to use statistics to raise an alarm, let's talk about the fact that there are more African-American youth in poverty than there were two decades ago. Or, let's be honest about institutional racism which prevents 55% of black graduates from being employed (compared to 25% of white graduates) (U.S.

Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 1992). Rather than point fingers at our youth, we should be asking what our institutions are doing to enhance prospects for young people who are overcoming incredible odds and succeeding, only to confront barriers in young adulthood. What are we doing to enhance their chances for success rather than opting to build more prisons for our failures?

Fourth, let's remember that not only are the majority of today's youth well-adjusted, but also that the great majority of children who grow up in vulnerable environments do not develop self-destructive patterns of behavior (Werner & Smith, 1982). Perhaps it is these youth whom we ought to examine more closely. After all, in studying an epidemic, one of the first steps is to determine how the survivors differ from those who succumb to the disease. Rather than lamenting changing government policies or a changing family structure, policy makers and educators would do better to clarify the resiliency factors which help youth in the most tragic circumstances survive and thrive. Then, let's take the steps necessary to create the conditions and foster the personal attributes which enhance the well-being of all young people. Focusing on prevention—rather than treatment—is more cost effective in the long run. Since the U.S. spends more than $1 billion each year simply to maintain its juvenile justice system, a prevention approach makes the most sense in so many ways. As the saying goes: You can pay me now or you can pay me later.

Fifth, while the problems faced by youth are serious, I also want to caution against framing the issue as one which constitutes an "epidemic". Certainly, some of our youth are troubled and "at risk". Precisely because such problems as suicide, drug addiction, child abuse, and delinquency are enormous tragedies argues persuasively that the most accurate information and perspective should be applied to their study and prevention. Blanket approaches which categorize all youth as "at risk" are not effective and really dilute the effectiveness of what should be targeted, research-based efforts. As Clay and Aquila (1994, p. 67) argue: "the fascination with gangs is distracting us from the need to develop effective, coordinated strategies for preventing and combating crime".

Adolescence must be viewed from a normative perspective rather than from a problems perspective. Imagine how different our view of early childhood might be if we taught child development only through discussions of bed-wetting, stuttering, and sibling rivalry. Yet, the same approach we take to early childhood is rejected when we teach and

research about adolescents from a deficit, epidemic or crisis perspective. Why is it that when we talk about an educational initiative for youth, we use negative terminology like "at risk" or "plight"? There's an invidiousness at work here which views young people from a medical model that sees only illness and prescribes only treatments or punishments. From a policy standpoint, a problem that is predictable is preventable.

The choice we have seems to hinge on whether we are willing to understand what research tells us about the conditions that provide some protection from adversity and negative outcomes, or we let potentially anti-social children ripen into persistent offenders (as, unfortunately, we've been doing too often). It's time to change the deficit focus of youth programs and concentrate on building strengths rather than focusing on liabilities. Developing youth potential means focusing our efforts on creating the positive conditions and individual assets which foster the presence of resiliency factors and offset risk factors. We need to concentrate our efforts away from just "fixing" problem kids and toward efforts for creating positive opportunities to develop youth potential. Let's commit ourselves to taking a critical, unbiased look at the research related to youth problems. Only then will we transcend ephebiphobia and focus on helping—rather than punishing—the minority of youth who truly need our help and support.

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Who is at risk : The system or youth ?

Jason Bocarro

" Crime and bad lives are the measure of the State's failure. All crime in the end is the crime of the community".---H. G. Wells.

One of the most prominent social issues in North America is the problem of juvenile crime. The gap between the public's perception of juvenile crime and the reality seems to be, "as wide as the Grand Canyon....primarily because what debate there is on the topic is characterized by rhetoric, demagoguery, and simplistic solutions" (Schwartz, 1989, p. 22). Consequently the public is often led into supporting expensive and often ineffective programs. Schwartz (1989) points to politicians and the media as the protagonists behind the public's confusion and their lack of understanding on this issue. Indeed, other researchers have questioned the effectiveness of some of the most popular anti-violence programs currently employed by schools, accusing them of responding to this issue with "off-the-shelf" curriculum packages designed for school officials and politicians to find a way to present a "political cover" in what is a topical and sensitive issue (Sautter, 1995).

Perceptions of Juvenile Crime

An example of the public's misconception is that juvenile crime is rising. According to data released by the FBI, youth crime is actually declining. For example, arrest figures from 1992 (the most recent year for which FBI current statistics are available) indicate that the total youth arrested was 16% of all arrests, compared to the all-time high of 26% in 1975 (Sautter, 1995). Canada reports similar statistics. McCrossin (1993, p. i) points out that statistics on crime (in Nova Scotia, Canada), "....do not support the public's perception that youth crime has risen significantly".

These figures are not justification to dismiss and ignore the problems faced by youth today. For example, 1992 saw a record number of

violent crimes committed with a handgun. The youth murder rate, coupled with the diminishing age of many perpetrators has increased in the 1990's, and, according to the Department of Justice, young, black males between the ages of 20 and 24 are three times more likely to be victims of gun violence than young white males (Sautter, 1995). Therefore, in a world where the issues confronting youth are constantly changing, it is imperative to address the issue of who are the youth most at risk and whether the system is adequately responding to their needs. Furthermore, if the nature of crimes are changing, the ways to treat offenders should change with them.

Many people believe that youth should be punished as retribution for previous offences and, provided the punishment is severe enough, it will act as a deterrent against future transgressions. Others support treatment or rehabilitation because of the belief that these programs are more humane and have greater potential to resocialize offenders back into the community (Munson, 1991). Despite the vociferous nature of many of the debates on this issue, effective strategies sought to prevent or treat delinquent behavior have been limited.

A realistic dilemma faced by the juvenile justice system is the balance between the demands of distributive justice to produce "fair" outcomes, alongside the need to treat children in adaptable ways, separate from adults. This balancing act is complicated by inadequate resources combined with deeply rooted prejudice against poorer families and racial and ethnic minority groups who dominate the court's clientele (Krisberg and Austin, 1993). Thus, "although the political rhetoric may swing back and forth from punitive themes to rehabilitative values, actual court practices are remarkably resistant to change" (Krisberg & Austin, 1993, p. 182).

The juvenile justice system in North America has come under increasing criticism. Two of the main contentious critiques have come from academics (Corrado, LeBlanc & Trepanier, 1983). The first contends that the juvenile justice system actually perpetuates juvenile delinquency. When young people who engage in deviant behavior are arrested, they are labelled delinquent and may subsequently behave in accordance with their new identity. A second, more radical perspective is the belief that the presence of coercive treatment simply reflects the true purpose of juvenile justice: the social control of lower socioeconomic and racial minority youth. This social control is not in the youth's best interests but in the best interests of the economic elite.

The juvenile justice system has also been criticized for implementing ineffective treatment programs at the high financial expense of institutionalizing young offenders. Because traditional strategies for handling young offenders have seemingly failed, there is increasing support for alternative forms to incarceration. However, agencies responsible for these alternative methods to incarcerating juveniles are often caught between naive reformers who believe that all young offenders should be handled within the community and reactionary citizens and officials who demand an increase in confinement measures (Mixdorf, 1989).

Diversion

One of the primary approaches used as an alternative to incarcerating a young offender is diversion. Diversion is usually defined as the process of diverting young offenders away from official contact with the juvenile justice system and usually includes the provision of services to the youth such as individual, group or family counseling, remedial education, job training and placement, drug or alcohol treatment, and recreation programs (Ezell, 1992). But while a review of the literature suggests that diversion may be a successful solution to some, it is not the answer to all of the shortcomings within the juvenile justice system.

Diversion has been justified on several grounds. Juvenile courts have been criticized for not protecting the rights of the youth, providing irregular and inconsistent guidance, and failure in rehabilitation programs. This stems from the belief that the court has too broad a role and that its function should be limited to repeat or serious offenders. Thus, lesser offenders should be diverted away from the formal system, reducing the system's caseload and costs.

Some theorists believe that the present delinquency problem is the culmination of our cultural intolerance of diversity and our overly restrictive boundaries on acceptable behavior (Rubin, 1985). Diversion can help reduce those impositions that the juvenile courts may place on this behavior. Furthermore, the employment of neighborhood-based community service programs offer more hope for rehabilitation effectiveness than the traditional judicial system. Such programs, if flexibly administered, can gain the trust of both the child and his/her family, be more accessible, and services can be delivered in a more timely fashion to meet the needs of the client (Rubin, 1985).

The labelling theory is one of the principal rationales behind diversion in that it is concerned with the stigmatization which may be attached to the delinquent. Theorists believe that rather than being inherent, deviancy is a social construction produced by definitions of those who enforce standards of behavior (Schafer, 1969). Labelling theorists believe that delinquents are normal individuals who persist in deviant behavior due to the effects of negative interaction with figures of authority (Purdy & Richard, 1984). It is argued that diversion could prevent destructive labelling.

Youth Agencies and Diversion

The increased use of diversion over the past twenty years has resulted in a variety of programming for juvenile offenders. This seems to have originated from informal probation by probation departments, resulting in the creation of agencies interested in working with diverted adolescents (Phelps, 1976). Many juvenile courts have adopted these youth agencies as an alternative to incarcerating certain young offenders. These agencies are known by a variety of names, some being private, non-profit organizations, others being local government departments. However, in general, most have not been embraced by local funding bodies due to their lack of political support (Rubin, 1985).

Many of these agencies have built useful political relationships and have been able to fund themselves. The nature and extent of the service will vary among different communities and depend upon both the resources available and local definitions of delinquency. The agencies' main source of clients are provided by referrals from the police and probation services. Agencies can provide assessments of a referred youth and recommend programs to be undertaken through other youth-serving agencies in the community. For example, 'The Youth Alternative Society' in Halifax, Nova Scotia, is an agency authorized to provide alternative measures to young people aged between twelve and fifteen years. In 1991, approximately 97% of referrals resulted in an agreement whereby the offender could make amends for his/her offence. Statistics provided show that 93.8% were successfully completed. Most agreements included an apology to the victim, followed by community service work and an essay (McCrossin, 1993).

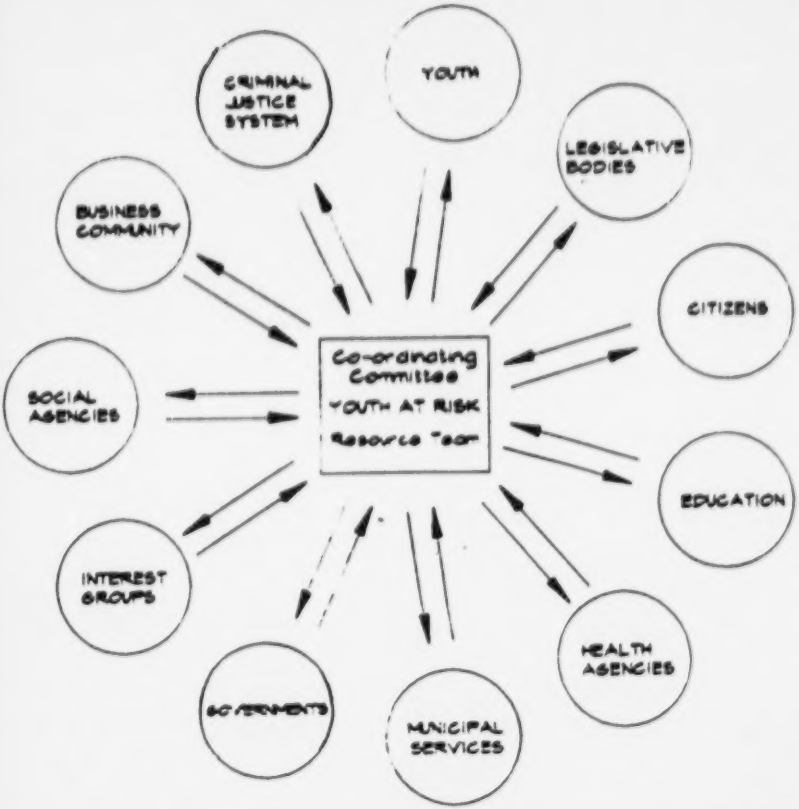
The coordination of youth-serving agencies is a stated intention of many bureaus, their objective being to work with a wide array of community agencies in order to outline their respective programs, help in the development of required youth services and reduce duplicate programs (Rubin, 1985). In reality, there is often conflict and a lack of coordination among the various departments resulting in a non attainment of these objectives. Thus, the lack of coordination, cooperation and communication between different departments can often result in individuals being 'lost' in this bureaucratic process. For these problems to be addressed more successfully, relevant departments need to undertake these issues together rather than to approach them from simply an individual perspective. A better coordinated approach for prevention as well as treatment will enhance service access and use by you.

In Canada, the City of Halifax is currently attempting to address the issue of a more coordinated approach by facilitating cooperation between youth, different agencies and the citizens of Halifax. Thus, various agencies have agreed to cooperatively undertake a strategic planning process to improve collaboration and coordination, initially between their departments, and eventually between other organizations and the community in relation to at risk youth. As figure 1 indicates, there are many stakeholders involved in the at risk youth issue and unless a coordinated approach is adopted, an inefficient use of resources by different departments will be inevitable.

Criticisms of Diversion: Does it Work ?

Mark Ezell (1992, p. 50) states that, ".... diverted youth will avoid both the stigmatization of court handling and the criminogenic effects of association with other delinquents, and, as a result, will not commit subsequent delinquent acts". These behavioral improvements are also expected because of the counseling services many programs offer. However, Gensheimer et al., (1986, p. 42) maintain that, "conclusions drawn by reviewers of the literature have generally painted a pessimistic view for the promise of diversionary efforts". Furthermore, the results from various evaluations of diversion programs have been inconsistent and fragmented (Blomberg, 1983).

Figure 1: City of Halifax Youth at Risk Stakeholders Map



Model adapted from Bryson, J. M. (1988). Strategic Planning for Public and Non Profit Organizations. San Francisco: Jossie-Bass.

Pogrebin, Poole & Regoli (1984) suggest that diversion may merely be an extension of an ineffective system. Other criticisms of diversion include the prompting of unattainable goals, programs being incompatible with traditional justice systems, and the widening of social control over juveniles well beyond legal bounds (Austin & Krisberg, 1981). Not all deviant behavior requires treatment, yet the presence of community

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diversion services with none of the drawbacks of the penal system, can result not only in the treatment of offenders, but in the absorption, toleration or even encouragement of offenders (Carter and Klein, 1976). Furthermore if 'true diversion' is defined as the complete separation of the juvenile from the justice system with no strings attached, can diversion really exist if the agency hosting the diversion program is part of the justice system ?

Diversion programs have been criticized for increasing the diversity within the justice system. Therefore, rather than providing a true alternative to court, they have supplemented the court's function and increased both the number of youth under the court's jurisdiction and the number of youth brought to the attention of the juvenile justice system. Blomberg (1977) believes that this 'net widening' reduces individual freedom, increases recidivism, contributes to behavioral difficulties and can result in unnecessary intrusions into families. He documents a case in which a youth and his family were required to attend family counseling. As a result of a father's failure to fully cooperate, both the youth who was in trouble and his two brothers were removed from the home.

Researchers have identified certain problems with diversion that could be improved. For example, diversion programs should focus on a limited set of objectives and avoid trying to be all things to all people. Paying more attention to the rights of juveniles is another priority since prosecutors sometimes divert youth when there is inadequate evidence to fully convict them (Ezell, 1992). Therefore, the difference between guilt and innocence is sometimes left unaddressed. In certain cases, youths are asked to 'accept responsibility' before being diverted, and thus it is questionable whether diversion has been employed for no better reason other than to avoid the social embarrassment of going to court.

Research indicates that no single program will work for all youth , yet, most communities have only one type of diversion program. There is a definite need for communities to develop a broader variety of diversion programs, while justice officials should improve their ability to match diverted youth to the appropriate program (Ezell, 1992). Lloyd Mixdorf (1989), in discussing the need for a variety of treatment and programming options, points to the issue of lesser offenders learning delinquent attitudes and values from more troublesome offenders. He concludes that without proper classification and separation, the program will be controlled by the delinquent subculture.

Blomberg (1983) suggests that research should be designed to determine which type of youth are most positively affected by diversion programs. This, he claims, will result in more successful programs. Effective evaluation of these types of programs may provide answers as to what treatment works best for a particular offender (Frazier, 1983). Results from evaluations may also help to inform administrators of potential problems before they become irreversible or produce any long term detrimental effects. Ezell (1992) concludes by stating that certain questions need to be answered, concerning the type of person who works best with diverted youth, the training these people require, the duration of the program and its long and short term goals. However, when examining the alternatives to incarceration, it is useless to ask for evidence that prison works because the results are never known (Shakespeare, 1994). The true justification for incarceration lies within 'faith in law' and the need to defend values. Thus, Shakespeare (1994, p. 25) is cynical about the effectiveness of evaluating the alternatives to incarceration, because, "the fact that most prisoners re-offend on release tells us nothing about the number who would start offending without the threat of punishment".

Despite conflicting opinions and mixed results, diversion continues to be a popular policy. However the promise of diversion is often unfulfilled because of poor programming, programs being transformed into an alternative method of social control, net widening of the juvenile justice system and a failure to target appropriate youth (Austin & Krisberg, 1981; Blomberg, 1983). Those responsible for making decisions about the delivery of these programs (the broader community and its agents) do not consult with the recipients of the programs (the youth and youth leaders) which often results in programs becoming ineffective.

Conclusion

The use of community-based alternatives to incarceration seems to be increasing. However for maximum effectiveness, there is a need for greater cooperation between the different sectors of the system, along with greater planning, implementation and evaluation of these programs. Indeed diversion programs should link up with other programs which can provide 'positive' experiences with competence, belongingness, usefulness, and power which the authors claim are features of legitimate identity (Polk and Kobrin, 1976). A system that pessimistically views the youth as 'unrehabilitative' and incapable of the features of legitimate identity will

negate any positive outcomes that other agencies may be trying to achieve. Thus, in a period of economic constraint, a model that emphasizes cooperation, communication and coordination among different agencies will use limited resources in a more effective manner, enhancing and contributing to the well-being of youth.

In examining possible prevention programs, the American Psychological Association (APA) states that childhood intervention, employed as early as possible, is critical in helping to alleviate juvenile crime. However, if we adopt the philosophy that all youth are 'at risk' from the day they are born, then surely all youth need to be 'subjected to some type(s) of intervention program(s). Furthermore, the variety of these programs need to be increased to incorporate a wider array of youth from different social, racial and economic backgrounds, address differences between the genders and respond to the needs of the physically and/or mentally challenged. If all crime is the crime of the community, as H. G. Wells suggests, then surely it is time to accept the responsibility of addressing the issue of crime and its prevention as a community rather than looking for others to accept responsibility.

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Partners in Programming: Concordia University Inner City Youth Project

Lisa Ostiguy, Robert Hopp, & Randy Swedburg

Introduction

The Concordia University Inner City Youth (CICY) is a program that is designed to link university students with youth from disadvantaged backgrounds, in a way that is beneficial to both groups. This ongoing project taps into the experience and enthusiasm of students in Concordia's Leisure Studies Program, utilizing those students to provide recreation activities for youth from Montreal's inner city areas.

Although the meanings given to leisure and recreation are neither ambiguous nor universally agreed upon (Godbey, 1985), there is a general consensus that recreational activities are not only ends, providing immediate gratification and enjoyment, but also a means for attaining long range personal goals and social goals (Willits & Willits, 1986). Kleiber Larson and Csikszentmihalyi (1986) and Mobily (1989) identified recreational activities to be very important to the adolescent because they provide opportunities to explore and form her or his own identity, potency and autonomy. For youth, recreational participation is often seen as part of the learning process where individuals seek to establish their own identity and acquire knowledge of their sociocultural environment, practice their social behavior and cooperative skills, achieve specific intellectual or physical attainments and also explore a variety of peer, family and continuity roles (Iso-Ahola, 1980).

Over the past twenty-five year the importance of leisure or recreational activities for youth has been well documented (Mobily, 1989; Iso-Ahola, 1980; Iso-Ahola and Crowley, 1991). However, most of the existing documentation focuses on middle class youth in suburban settings, with little empirical evidence on the benefits of leisure for youths from urban areas. There are a number of special problems that affect the leisure patterns

of youth in the inner city. Many are economically disadvantaged, which may result in the lack of opportunities for constructive play, little access to programs outside of school, lack of open space, toys, equipment and, inadequate supervision and child care. This makes it difficult to judge whether existing studies that do not focus on inner city youth are relevant to inner city youth. A review of the literature reveals numerous studies that have examined youth leisure experiences (Roberts, 1983; Maton, 1990; Raymond and Kelly, 1991). Many articles highlight elements of existing programs for inner city, urban or at-risk youth (Fairfax, Wright and Maupin, 1988) however, very few studies have examined the effects of recreation or leisure as an intervention technique.

There is a strong emphasis in the literature on the negative impact of free time for youth, implying that it leads to deviant behaviour. Larson and Kleiber (1991) found that deviant activities are common in adolescent leisure behaviour. Leisure and free time, by themselves are not necessarily positive for an adolescent, nor is it certain they will produce positive results. For adolescents, the absence of meaningful free time can have severe psychological effects and can lead to developmental problems (Larson and Klieber, 1991). Preliminary evidence suggests that much adolescent negative behaviour is motivated by lack of arousal or the need to challenge (Iso-Ahola and Crowley, 1991). It is important to investigate leisure attitudes and experiences in order to understand the leisure needs and interests of youth in the inner city. Leisure preference may be a product of individual histories of learning and socialization (Crawford, Godbey and Crouter, 1986).

In a more social-psychological discussion of leisure, Iso-Ahola and Manell (1985) emphasize that leisure choices and actions are socially affected. People continue to revise leisure goals, patterns and habits in response to their social environment. There is evidence that over half of the activities important to adults are those learned in childhood. Godbey (1985) concluded from the considerable evidence that the bulk of the recreation skills used by adults are learned before the completion of one's schooling. A crucial factor in whether or not an individual will participate as an adult is the quality of exposure they receive during childhood and adolescence. Economically disadvantaged youth have access to fewer leisure opportunities and as a result have fewer leisure choices to fill their free time. There is a need to increase the repertoire of experiences through the provision options for youth in the inner city: to develop positive leisure behaviours as adults.

Positive leisure experiences can offer youths an opportunity for satisfying involvement with others and provide a sense of acceptance and security that leads to well being. Psychologists who have done extensive research with adolescents have examined the relationship between their recreational habits and their emotional and social development. Studies have found that self image of youth is closely tied to their involvement in leisure activities (Iso-Ahola and Crowley, 1991).

There are serious problems with respect to the use of free time by today's adolescents. The lack of productive opportunities often leads to excessive television watching and as previously mentioned antisocial leisure behaviour. Figures from Statistics Canada (1991) indicate that 15-19 year olds spend an average of 18.6 hours weekly in front of the television. Youth from more advantaged families have more leisure opportunities, special classes, and easier access to transportation. Inner city youth have fewer opportunities to participate in leisure programs. A lack of leisure skills combined with restricted opportunities is likely to cause feelings of boredom in leisure which in turn may give rise to delinquency and drug use in free time (Iso-Ahola and Weissinger, 1987).

Unstructured time may be undesirable for adolescents. Iso-Ahola and Crowley (1991) found that if adolescents lack personal leisure skills and are constrained from participating in meaningful recreational activity, boredom results. Orcutt (1984) found a positive correlation between boredom and alcohol abuse among female college students. Wasson (1981) found a positive correlation between boredom and deviant behaviour in both male and female college students. One attempt of this study is to counterbalance the too much time and lack of leisure skills and opportunities of urban youths by providing them with avenues to enhance their leisure experience, in both quality and variety. The CICY has taken steps toward providing these avenues to some disadvantaged youths in the Montreal area.

Purpose of the Program

The CICY has established a permanent structure that offers free leisure services to pre-adolescents and adolescents in the inner-city of Montreal. The program includes activities such as sports, drama, outdoor adventure, dance, and arts and crafts. Youths are provided with a range of positive experiences to help with the realization that such opportunities can be used as vehicles to fulfilling dreams. An ongoing developmental program

guides them through the many transitions from childhood to young adulthood. The goal is to help these individuals become positive contributors in our society.

The program is carried out through a partnership with the Concordia University, Department of Leisure Studies, a school board in Montreal, community organizations and university students volunteers. Concordia University students animate all the activities. One of the important aspects of the program is the interaction between the university students and the youths and the university student mentors. The mentor type of relationship establishes a certain trust between university students and youths. Such a relationship serves as the foundation for providing other basic and required services to youth, including tutoring and counselling.

Description of the Program

Between 1988 and 1992 a number of pilot programs were initiated in order to establish a link between university students and youth in the inner city schools. As a result of these pilot projects, Concordia University students as part of a 6-credit academic course plan and implement recreational programs for youth in inner city schools.

The CICY offers a select group of university students an opportunity to combine academic study with on the job professional training. The university students have an opportunity to experience the practical aspects of theory based education.

The CICY focuses on giving children and youth extra attention outside of the classroom. The use of university students as role models, helps to bridge the generation gap between parents and teachers and youth that is sometimes an obstacle to learning. The university students acting as mentors positively influence the youth because they are different from many traditional authority figures.

The burn out rate of teachers and social workers in the inner city community is high. The lack of resources and budget cut backs makes it a challenge to offer unique recreational opportunities. The university students provide a fresh approach to offering unique leisure programming for youth, stimulating interest.

In 1993-94 over 500 inner city youth, ranging in age from 6-16 were involved at 18 sites. There were over 50 university students who participated in the project.

The programs are primarily offered at schools in areas identified by the school board as inner city. Inner city schools are located in areas where there is a high percentage of families with low incomes. The school programs are held before school, at lunch time, and after school. In order to reach youth away from school, programs are also operated week nights and weekends in community and teen-drop in centres.

Programs at each site are selected based on a number of factors, including:

A) Facilities- What space is available? Many of the inner city schools do not have spaces to operate programs for large groups.

B) Interests of youth- At the beginning of each school year, the youth are given a chance to give input on their programming interests.

C) School board and community center needs- At some schools and community centres, programs are ongoing (such as after school sports and arts and crafts classes.) CICY provides capable leaders for these activities.

D) University students and volunteers- Whenever possible, the program tries to utilize the special leisure skills of the university student or volunteer. Individuals are matched with programs they feel comfortable leading.

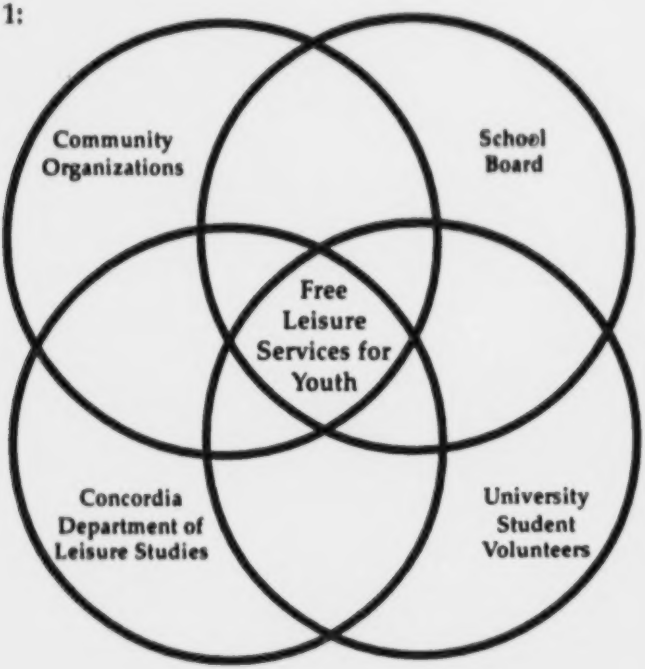
E) Resources- Every effort is made to share resources. Most of the equipment and supplies come from the schools or the community centers. Concordia University provides the equipment and fees for special projects (such as outdoor adventure programs, photography, fashion shows and craft programs) through fund raising efforts and grant support.

Program Partnership

The CICY is a success due to the partnership of four groups; Concordia University department of Leisure Studies, University students

and volunteers, a school board in the greater Montreal area, and up to ten community organizations.

Figure 1:



Providing leisure services is difficult in times of economic uncertainty and limited resources. The partnership results in the successful sharing of resources. Each group offers something to the program and in return receives benefits creating a situation where everyone wins. Table 1 highlights the contributions and benefits for each program partner.

Another result of the partnership is that free leisure services are offered for youth. Unique youth programs that could not otherwise be offered are now available. Included are outdoor activities, cooperative games, hobbies, and other recreational skills. By using the school as a home base for many programs, the youths are encouraged to come to school to participate in activities that they enjoy. As a result youths now associate positive experiences with the school.

Table 1: Project Partners Contributions and Benefits

Partner	Contributions	Benefits
School Board	Provides facilities and equipment for programs Provides staffing to assist with the supervision of the programs Provides information on the needs and interests of Inner City Youth	Diverse programs for 400-600 inner city youths at the schools including before and after school and lunchtime programs
Concordia University Student Volunteers	Volunteer time to plan, develop and implement programs	Develop an understanding of the needs and interests of inner city youth Develop leadership and programming skills Opportunity to apply theory to practice
Concordia University Department of Leisure Studies	Offers course on Adolescent Recreation Organizes Volunteer Scheduling Fundraising for Special Programs Evaluation of the project, including program evaluation and impact on youth	opportunity to directly impact the delivery of community leisure services Opportunity to carry out research that will contribute to a theoretical understanding of the impact of leisure services on youth
Community Organizations	Provides facilities and equipment for programs Provides staffing to assist with the supervision of the programs Provides information on the needs and interests of Inner City Youth	Increased program offerings on weeknights and weekends

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The program also offers university student role models as program leaders. This mentoring of youth by students reinforces the importance of continuing an education. The university students also benefit greatly from the experience. It is an opportunity to bridge theory presented in class with practice. Many of the students continue to volunteer after the university school year finishes.

The links between leisure participation and academic success are difficult to measure. However, many teachers and school officials report anecdotally that there is an impact from leisure participation changes attitudes, self confidence and behaviour have been identified. As part of the program, and as a result of support from the Social Sciences Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC), the Concordia University department of Leisure Studies will begin to examine the longitudinal impact of recreation participation on "stay in school" related activities. The research will focus on measuring the impact of recreational activities on self esteem and leisure attitudes. This project has been mainly funded through grants from Employment and Immigration Canada, and has also conducted private fundraising ventures to supplement its expenses.

Evaluation of the Program

The program is evaluated using a number of different methods including:

1) **Site visitations**: Each program is visited at least once a week by the program coordinator in order to supervise and provide on site feedback to the university volunteers.

2) **Daily Evaluation**: Each university student/volunteer is required to submit a daily report on attendance and gender breakdown, specific daily activities, comments, problems and/or suggestions.

3) **Instructor Evaluation:** Students in the adolescent recreation course are evaluated by their professor , who supervises the experience.

4) **School Board Evaluation:** A designated school official makes random observations and provides feedback to the program coordinator.

5) Community Center Evaluation: The community centers, which have university students/volunteers, carry out monthly program quality evaluations.

The CICY continues to grow through the offering of developmental opportunities for inner city youth, and rewarding education experiences for university students and volunteers. This exemplary youth intervention strategy is still in its infancy. As additions and refinements to the project are seen, a model, (applicable to other inner cities, where a university program in Recreation/Leisure Studies is found, is emerging.

Additional research is needed to determine the limits of the parameters which can be applied to this model. However, it does not appear that these limits will be reached in the near future.

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The Black Church and Youth at Risk for Incarceration

Roger H. Rubin, Andrew Billingsley and Cleopatra Howard Caldwell

Abstract

Six hundred and thirty-five Northern, Black churches in the United States were surveyed regarding the offering of youth support programs. One hundred and seventy-six reported having at least one program directed at adolescent non-members of the church, primarily from low-income homes. This is important considering the increasing number of African-American youth at risk for incarceration. The most common programs consisted of Christian fellowships, ministry, counseling, group discussions, rap sessions, seminars, and workshops. Sports activities were second in frequency. Least common were AIDS and youth health-related services. Relatively few programs were directed at delinquency prevention. It appears the greatest interest in youth programs may be found when churches are Methodist, older, middle-class, larger in membership, owned or mortgaged, and with more paid clergy and staff. Characteristics of youth-oriented pastors are discussed. Generally, some of the most prominent issues facing Black adolescents are not being adequately addressed by Black churches. Greater responsiveness may be found through church cooperation and collaboration with secular community agencies and other church groups.

The Black Church Family Project is a study of family-oriented community outreach programs provided by Black churches. The survey data discussed in this paper reflects only the programming for youth development as reported in the two northern regions of the project.

This is a timely issue because the dangers facing contemporary adolescents are formidable. The concept of teenagers "at risk" is increasingly used (Dryfoos, 1990). It describes an age cohort vulnerable to many negative forces in its developmental movement toward adulthood.

Unlike their predecessors, who suffered more from disease, today's adolescents risk harm primarily from social ills such as substance abuse, violence, and lack of economic opportunities. This is especially true for minority youth who are the most likely to live in circumstances that increase the possibility that they will succumb to destructive influences. For African-American youth the erosion of a sense of community binding citizens together in mutual regard has been reported (Billingsley, 1992). The primary causes include the decline of the blue-collar working class, residential flight of the new middle-class, and possible emergence of an under-class, creating environments conducive to anti-social behavior among the young. The Black church has historically been the institutional bastion of strength within the Black community. Today it faces the challenge of providing the leadership and resources needed to sustain its young during this period of upheaval. That social problems are often preventable and amenable to intervention should, however, be a source of optimism.

Among the most salient of the problems facing Black adolescents today are the increasing crime, delinquency and homicide rates among them (Gibbs, 1988; Select Committee on Children, Youth, and Families, 1989). Mauer (1990) reports that 23 percent of Black males ages 20-29 were either in prison, jail, on probation, or on parole as of 1989. Forty-four percent of all prisoners in the United States are Black. The New York Times reports ("Young Criminals,"1994) that the cost for incarcerating a youth in New York State is $70,000 a year. Recently released figures from the United States Justice Department's Bureau of Justice Statistics indicate young Black males were almost 14 times more likely to be murder victims during 1992 than the general population. Black males age 14 to 16 were 1.5 times more likely than whites to be the victim of a violent crime ("Young Black," 1994).

Role of the Black Church

The Black church is one of the primary institutional foundations of the Black community. How responsive to the needs of Black youth is the Black church today? The Black Church Family Project surveyed a total of 635 Northern churches, 320 churches in the North Central and 315 in the Northeastern United States, regarding the existence of youth support programs. One hundred and seventy-six churches reported having at least

one youth support program directed at adolescent non-members of the church, most of whom are from low-income homes.

Methods and Limitations

Since there was no existing comprehensive list of Black churches already compiled, the Black Church Family Project used a variety of sources to identify as many Black churches as possible. These sources included official denominational lists, lists from local ministerial alliances, universities, local chapters of the National Urban League and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), information obtained from the executive offices of mayors and county executives, funeral directors, telephone directories, and numerous individuals familiar with Black churches and denominations.

Telephone interviews were conducted. The operational definition of a Black church was one in which there was a majority Black congregation with a Black senior minister.

Ten primary sampling areas represented five states in the Northeastern region of the country: New York/Northeast New Jersey; Syracuse, NY; Buffalo, NY; Trenton, NJ: Salem, NJ: Philadelphia, PA; Pittsburgh, PA; Boston, MA; Bridgeport, CT and New Haven, CT. A random sample of churches, stratified by denomination and urbanicity within the region was selected from these primary areas.

Most of the churches (84 percent) in the Northeastern sample are from large urban areas; fewer churches (16 percent) are from small urban areas. There is only one rural church in the Northeastern sample.

In the North Central region, 14 primary sampling areas were selected from six states: Detroit, MI; Flint, MI; Chicago, IL; Champaign/Urbana, IL; St. Louis, MO; Kansas City (MO and KS); Atchinson, KS; Cleveland, OH; Cincinnati, OH; Dayton, OH; Toledo, OH; Hamilton, OH; Indianapolis, IN; Grant-Blackford, IN.

Most of the churches in the North Central sample are also from large urban areas (67 percent); churches from small urban areas comprise 32 percent of the sample. There are two rural churches in the North Central sample, thus comprising one percent of the sample.

Types of Youth Programs

Of the 176 churches reporting youth programs (See Table 1), the greatest interest was shown for teen support programs which are provided by 39% of the churches. These programs consisted of Christian fellowships, ministry, counseling, group discussions, rap sessions, seminars, and workshops. The second most prominent offering were sports activities. Thirty-one percent of the churches provided athletic camps, teams, and/or martial arts classes. Among the least common programs were youth AIDS support programs (3%) and youth health-related services (2%). The former consisted of classes/seminars, counseling, and financial support to persons with AIDS. The latter included health clinics, seminars, and screening for specific health problems. However, it should be noted that substance abuse programs (drug/alcohol counseling, seminars for drug abuse prevention and workshops) were offered by 15% of the churches. Additional services included college student financial support (emergency financial assistance, scholarships) which was found in 16% of the churches. Fifteen percent fell into the categories of parenting/sexuality (counseling, classes/workshop, pregnancy prevention, seminars, support for teen parents) and only 14% of programming was directed at youth-at-risk (counseling, delinquency prevention, delinquent youth residence). Eight percent of the churches reported role modeling (foster grandparents, mentors) and 7% employment/job readiness (career fairs/days, job training, summer employment). Fourteen percent of the churches listed other youth support programs.

Characteristics of Churches

What do these findings tell us about the role of the Black church in youth development programs? What are some of the salient characteristics of those churches which did sponsor youth programs vs. those which did not? The study found that 28% or 176 of the 635 Northern churches surveyed did have community outreach programs for youth. There was some variation, however, among the different denominations, $x2(3) = 8.20$, $p < .05$. As Table 2 shows, among Methodists the figures were 38% and 24% of Baptist congregations had youth programs. Among Pentecostal churches 26% had such programs, and 33% listed under "other". This suggests that Methodist churches may give slightly higher priority to youth support programs than churches in other denominations.

TABLE 1

RANK ORDER LISTING OF YOUTH SUPPORT PROGRAMS (N=176 CHURCHES)

Youth Support Programs	Number of Churches	Percentage*
Teen Support	69	39%
Sports Activities	55	31%
College Student Financial Support	29	16%
Parenting/Sexuality	27	15%
Youth Substance Abuse Programs	27	15%
Youth-at-Risk	25	14%
Role Modeling	14	8%
Employment/Job Readiness	13	7%
Youth AIDS Support Programs	6	3%
Youth Health-related Services	4	2%
Other Youth Support Programs	24	14%

*Percentages do not add to 100% because respondents were asked to check all that apply.

Churches can be conducting a program in more than one category.

It was also found that the older more established churches were more likely to conduct youth programs than the newer ones, $x2(2) = 10.57$, $p < .01$. For example, among the newest churches, those less than 41 years old, only 23% reported youth programs. Among those 41-75 years the proportion rises to 32 while among churches 76 years and older, 36% reported such participation (See Table 2).

A third finding suggests that the operation of community oriented youth programs may be social class related. The survey found that the more middle-class the congregation the greater the likelihood of a youth sponsored program, $x2(2) = 21.90$, $p < .001$. For example, among the mostly middle-class churches nearly half, or 47% had such programs compared to only 17% of the mostly working class congregations (See Table 2).

A fourth finding shows that size of church congregation is a significant factor. The larger the membership the more support for youth programs, $x2(3) = 56.36$, $p < .001$. Among large churches with memberships of 401 or more nearly half or 48% had youth programs. By contrast among those with between 176-400 members 38% had youth programs. Among those with 71-175 members 19% reported having youth programs while only 12% of the smallest churches with 70 or fewer members had youth programs (See Table 2).

It has been observed that one of the more distinctive features of the Black church, one which gives it such independence and viability, is the tendency to own its own buildings and facilities. This too makes a difference in programming (See Table 2). Among churches who rented their facilities only 8% reported youth programs compared to 28% of those who were buying their property and 30% of those who already owned the property, $x2(2) = 11.86$, $p < .01$.

Another finding suggests the importance of human resources and leadership. The more paid clergy the more youth programs (See Table 2). Only 16% of the churches with no paid clergy offered youth programs. However, 29% of churches with one paid clergy had such programs and nearly half, or 49% of churches when two or more clergy were paid, $x2(2) = 33.23$, $p < .001$. When number of other paid staff are considered the greater the number the more likely the existence of youth programs. When no other paid staff is available only 18% of churches offered programs for youth compared to 37% when one or more additional paid staff was available, $x2(1) = 26.12$, $p < .001$.

To summarize, there are a number of church characteristics that predict the existence of youth programs. It appears the greatest interest in youth programs may be found when churches are Methodist, older, middle-class, larger in membership, owned or mortgaged, and with more paid clergy and staff. These churches are significantly more likely to offer youth programs than other churches. Even with such characteristics most Black churches do not offer programs for youth. For example, while fully two-thirds of Black churches in both Northern regions offer some types of family oriented community outreach programs only a quarter of these churches (176 out of 635) offer programs addressed specifically to youth. If the Black church is as important a community institution as it is believed to be, then relatively few of these substantial resources are being devoted to the major social problems faced by Black youth. On the other hand some

TABLE 2

YOUTH SUPPORT PROGRAMS BY CHURCH CHARACTERISTICS FOR TOTAL NORTH

Denominations	Total Churches	Churches with Youth Programs	
		N	%
Baptist	277	66	24
Methodist	82	31	38
Pentecostal	164	42	26
Other	112	37	33
Number of Years Congregation Has Been in Existence			
Less than 41	339	77	23
41-75	156	50	32
76 or more	132	48	36
Social Class of Congregations			
Mostly working class	194	33	17
Working / middle class	370	114	31
Mostly middle class	49	23	47
Membership Size			
6-70	146	18	12
71-175	185	35	19
176-400	157	54	34
401 or more	145	69	48
Building Ownership Status			
Renting	52	4	8
Buying	180	50	28
Own	394	120	30
Number of Paid Clergy			
None	188	30	16
One	352	101	29
Two or more	90	44	49
Number of Other Paid Staff			
None	305	56	18
One or more	322	118	37

variation among the churches exists. The fact that a quarter of Black churches do now engage in these youth programs suggests considerable potential for expansion.

Characteristics of Pastors

In youth programming as in other church sponsored programs the role of the minister is crucial. In the present study several findings highlight the characteristics of ministers associated with the sponsorship of youth programs (See Table 3). In general younger clergy seemed most interested in youth $x2(2) = 7.72$, $p < .05$. Those with no other outside employment, $x2(1) = 5.12$, $p < .05$, those who were trained at a seminary and/or bible college $x2(1) = 11.98$, $p < .001$; and pastors who were highly educated $x2(4) = 40.86$, $p < .001$, were all more likely to sponsor youth programs.

Discussion

Findings from the Black Church Family Project indicate that some of the most prominent issues facing African-American youth are not being adequately addressed by Black churches. Among these are health related services and AIDS support programs with practically no churches reporting their existence. Substance abuse programs are being provided by only 27 churches. Parenting/sexuality programs are also offered in only 27 churches. Twenty-nine churches award college student financial support. Youth-at-risk programs, focusing on delinquency, were available in 25 churches. Fifteen churches provided role modeling such as foster grandparents and 13 churches offered employment/job readiness. The greatest effort was placed on teen support programs which are largely dependent on discussions and sports activities. These were presented in 69 and 55 churches respectively.

These findings are of particular concern because social and behavioral science literature and theory indicates that community based institutions and support play important roles in the healthy socialization of youth. (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Pittman and Wright, 1991). Thus, the Black church has the potential to become the pivotal institutional structure in preventing destructive youthful behavior leading to incarceration.

TABLE 3

YOUTH SUPPORT PROGRAMS BY
PASTOR CHARACTERISTICS

Age	Total Churches	Churches with Youth Programs	
		N	%
Less than 35	42	17	40
35-64	471	136	29
65 or older	114	22	19
Other Employment			
Has outside employment	215	48	22
No outside employment	408	126	31
Seminary or Bible College Training			
Yes	501	156	31
No	109	16	15
Educational Level			
Less than high school	57	6	10
High school	109	15	14
Some college	93	20	22
College graduate	127	46	36
Master's/Doctorate	188	77	41

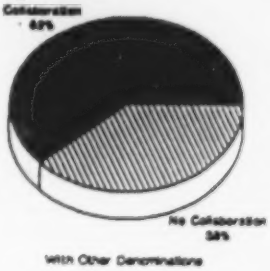
Church Cooperation with Other Community Institutions

The integration and cooperation of various social institutions, including the church, within the African-American community in order to improve the lives of its inhabitants is strongly suggested in the Study of Black Churches

Table 4

Collaboration with Other Churches and Secular Social Agencies

With Same Denomination



With Other Denominations

With Social Agencies

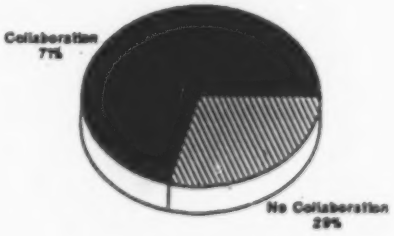
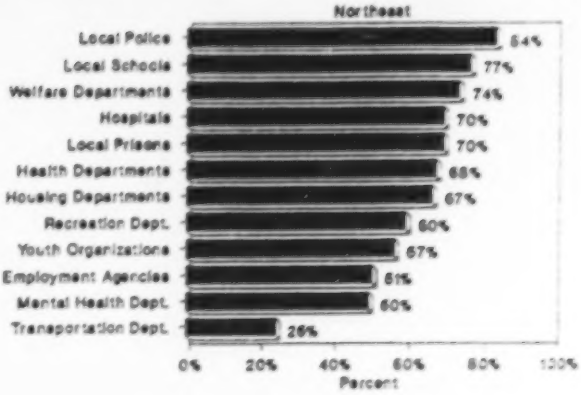
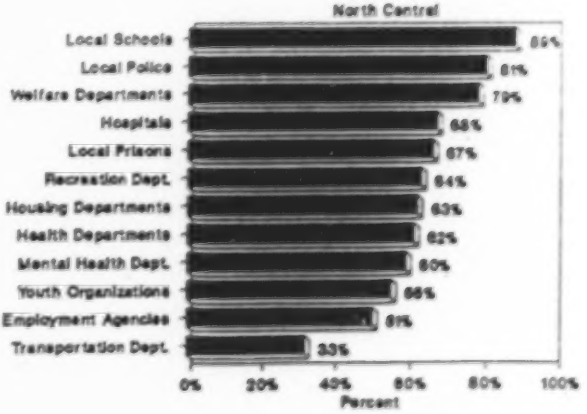


Table 5
Church Cooperation with Social Agencies





and Family-Oriented Community Outreach Programs in the Northeastern and North Central regions of the United States.

Previous research related to this project helped determine the social networking patterns of churches. These patterns often resulted in extended outreach activities. In 1988, a Pilot Study was undertaken of 71 churches located primarily along the east coast that were known to have extensive community outreach programs.

The Pilot Study data revealed that, in addition to conducting community outreach programs independently, many churches had established elaborate and extensive networks of collaboration with other churches and community agencies to carry out this work. Such cooperation extends the range and potential impact of church activities. For example, in the Anacostia area of Washington, D.C., a group of 14 predominately Black United Methodist congregations collaborated to provide drug education and prevention programs for the area.

Comparable levels of cooperation with other churches and social agencies is also apparent. Table 4, shows that in both northern regions, about two-thirds of the churches with outreach programs collaborate extensively with other churches within and across denominational lines to provide community outreach activities. A larger percentage (71 percent) of these churches have cooperated with local secular agencies. This pattern prevails in both regions. Table 5 lists the types of social agencies with which the churches have collaborated.

An overwhelming majority of the churches that have worked with social agencies maintain working relationships with police and welfare departments, local schools, hospitals and prisons, and health, housing and recreation departments. Many of these church activities involve helping families make more effective contact with these community agencies.

Church Outreach Activities and Minister's Community Involvement

The research data unearthed an important relationship between the senior ministers' involvement in the community and the outreach efforts of the churches. Senior ministers who are active in the community are more likely than are senior ministers who are not involved with the community

to have churches that offer a greater number of outreach programs. Churches with senior ministers who are involved in the community are more likely to work with social agencies. The senior ministers who are involved in the community appear to have relatively high levels of formal education and seminary training and are from churches that have more than one paid clergy member.

Perceptions of Neighborhood Problems

These data also reveal that the senior ministers and other church respondents offer a variety of opinions regarding their perceptions of the major problems in the community in which the church is located. Drugs, crime and unemployment lead the list of cited perceived neighborhood problems in this study.

The most frequently-mentioned community problem was drugs. More than half (54 percent) of the respondents indicated that drugs and substance abuse are the most serious problem plaguing the community. Therefore, it is appropriate that churches respond by sponsoring programs that directly and indirectly target substance abuse issues. However, fewer than 5 percent of the 1805 outreach programs studied in the total Black Church Family Project include substance abuse among their topical priorities. The nature of the substance abuse programs sponsored by participating churches includes drug and alcohol counseling, seminars and workshops, church-sponsored Alcoholics Anonymous and Narcotics Anonymous meetings, and AIDS support and prevention programs. Several of the programs mentioned, such as role model and teen support activities, could be defined as indirect efforts to prevent substance abuse.

The second most frequently-mentioned neighborhood problem was crime, ranging from vandalism to murder. Northeastern and North Central churches have organized nearly one hundred programs that address crime in the community. Many of these programs provide support services to the incarcerated and their families, while only twenty-five sponsor counseling and delinquency prevention programs for youth. Many of the program thrusts that were indicated to address substance abuse are also useful in addressing community crime.

Conclusion

The Black church is poised through its links with other community organizations to promote a sense of community and citizenship. The prevention of adolescent anti-social behavior and the provision of alternatives to incarceration should be a primary product of this process. The church as catalyst for improving the lives of African-Americans will be reaffirmed and the entire national community will benefit.

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Making the Connection Between Leisure and At-Risk Youth in Today's Society

James Calloway

The role of leisure in addressing the at risk youth problem in today's society has received minimal attention by students, educators and practitioners in the leisure profession; yet the discipline of sociology of leisure constitutes a rich and long-standing research tradition in deviant leisure activity. Accord to Chris Rojek, sociologist;

> The topic is intrinsically interesting and might stimulate more discussion than somewhat prosaic studies of leisure and its associated variables which choke most editions of the major journals of leisure and recreation research. More importantly the study of deviant leisure practice might throw some light on the most difficult of subjects - normal leisure relations.

There are many park and recreation professionals who would argue that recreation professionals who would argue that recreation is about fun - not misery, about opportunity - not oppression, about life - not death and destruction. Yet this is the opposing dichotomy that has resulted in our failure to gain the respect of related human service professional, i.e. the true measure of a professional is determined by how much damage it would do it its services were not rendered in an acceptable manner. Other professions know, and so does the public, that if services are denied or inappropriately administered, dire results can occur. The public has no idea as to what the negative results of failed leisure services would be.

As a profession we have not demonstrated successfully how valuable our contribution can be. The negative aspects of leisure must be explored if we are to determine our importance among the human service

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professionals and the public of the 21st century. Equally, the plight of our youth in today's society cannot wait for us to focus on our role with at risk youth. We must start now.

> No answers or solutions are attempted in this article. What I hope to accomplish is to offer you a different way of perceiving the problems of youth in today's society. Often times how we perceive a problem determines how we approach the problem. In my view the solutions to the at risk youth problem will be found when our perceptions of the causes are better understood and the adverse forces in our environment which impact on our youth are identified. Addressing symptoms is not the answer.

Making the Connection

Leisure and recreation experiences are not the product of a single system but the interaction between systems. It is within these systems that distance classes of behaviors are nourished, e.g. behaviors expected at a pep rally would not be expected at a church sermon. There are many health and welfare systems/programs in every community in this country to help at risk youth and their families: the county welfare agency, the county child protection agency, the juvenile court, the youth employment programs, the health and mental health programs, the child care and early childhood development agencies, private agencies funded by the United Way and other sources, the city recreation and parks department and dozens of programs within the public schools. However, the connections between these agencies is noticeable absent. First Director of Policy Analysis for California Education (PACE) concluded that:

> Tenacious collaboration alone will not make up for our societal under investment in children. The answer starts with recognition of the similarities and supportive structures of all systems involved in the habitation of families and their individual members.

There are numerous accounts of families serviced by nine or more different agencies, but none of the agencies take responsibility for helping the families. Separately they fail to treat the family and its individual members in an effective manner.

The Leisure Connection

Leisure is a form of activity that has many qualities in common with crime and delinquency. A Washington Post reporter wrote about the playground leader who reported children on his playground playing cops and drug dealers. One group of youth has small plastic packets of sugar simulating real drugs used on the streets. The rules of the game were for the youth to conceal the packets and get them to their friends who were hiding in another part of the park. Similarly stealing apples from a fruit stand or driving a stolen car can satisfy some of the basic needs of desires conventionally satisfied by such recreational pursuits as camping, athletics or the creative arts.

The need for recreational group activities is common to all youth; yet delinquent youth characteristically lack recreational skills, interest and motivation toward socially acceptable group activity. Exposure to acceptable play-group activities is essential at early age if youngsters are to seek appropriate group activities in their teens. By age 12, youth's values are soundly integrated into their attitudes and behaviors.

A lack of recreational alternatives results in negative pathological pursuits. We must clearly articulate to our youth appropriate choices within the context of their environments and the extent to which participation can be useful or abusive to them.

At Risk Youth

At risk youth have been defined as adolescents in potential trouble at school or home, involved with drug or alcohol but who have not been involved with the juvenile justice system. A second population of at risk youth is that group of young people who have already entered the juvenile system and have been in a confined residential setting. These descriptions don't go far enough. A child's environment must be considered as part of the overall scenario for potential at risk indicators.

A mother living a negative leisure lifestyle subjects the unborn fetus to potential at risk factors. Infant mortality per 1000 in the United States is the highest in the world. Many problems which occur at birth are a direct result of negative leisure lifestyles on the part of the adult parent. Fetal alcohol exposure, excessive cigarette smoking, cocaine and other

chemicals engaged in during pregnancy, in all likelihood will result in a baby born at risk. AIDS is another risk factor. When viewed within in the context of leisure, recreational sex, often spontaneous and unprotected, puts a baby at risk.

Poverty puts children at risk. Kids under five suffer more poverty than any age group in America. It is the number one contributor to ill health. Usually the poor are void of leisure opportunities. Quality of life is determined by one's leisure, and the absence of leisure results in the absence of living. Yet clearly, the government has not taken responsibility for promoting the importance of recreation in its citizens' lives. The President's Commission on American Outdoors (PCAO) was a point of light snuffed out by the Reagan and Bush administrations.

Other conditions may cause at risk conditions for youth. Entering kindergarten without adequate preparations and sensitive teachers can be a traumatic experience for children, resulting in long term trauma and potential at risk behavior. One school principal noted that schools contribute to 50 percent of the at risk youth problem in this country. Dating partners, foster care, child abuse, low self-esteem, children who own themselves (latch key) and parents who divorce their children (which is legal in 13 states and pending in many more) are all factors contributing to the at risk youth problem.

Government

Government around the world recognize the value of leisure in society. Our government must, therefore, share in the responsibility of making appropriate leisure activities available to ALL youth. By all vital measures, American children remain the most neglected in the developed world. Their health and welfare simply "not high on the agenda of this country", states Dr. Reed Tucson, former Washington D.C. Health Commissioner. Drastic cutbacks in educational funding are but one illustration of this point.

War and Recreation

Recreation and war are inextricably linked. Mark Maters, in his thesis entitled *War and Recreation* noted:

> The idea that war is a game persists even today, in part because war is an outlet for man's inherent aggressive tendencies. In the same way a sufficiently violent game can also serve as an outlet for aggression. If a country or society has no such games (as substitute for war) the outlet of its tensions, it must be forded to go to war or to be destroyed by its own pressures. Primitive societies had wars that were more like games, during peace they had games that were more like war. The interesting dichotomy that exists here is that violent games tend to breed more violence as well as its acceptance by the general population, yet a point may be made about human nature when general violence by the population is the only possible release.

War is a reality for many youth on the streets of our cities. Youth today play by their own rules. The war in our streets is evidence of this. Every 100 hours more youth die in the street in the U.S. than were killed in the Persian Gulf. Drugs, guns and death are a way of life in many communities in the U.S. Youth today expect to die young. It's a part of their culture.

Terrorism also exists on the streets of American cities. Old people fear attack from the youth gangs. The young cannot play on the streets for fear of drive-by shootings or kidnapping. The "bogey man" is no longer a fictional person but a real human being who threatens the lives of children daily. Children are kidnapped, raped and abused daily by parents and by strange people who consider their activity a form of leisure.

Technology

Social issues have not changed much in the last 20 or 30 years. Inflation, crime, war, energy, the environment and peace relations are but a few of the issues that will persist into the 21st century. Yet the issues have been compounded by the changing values and unprecedented challenges of new valued brought on by new technology that has challenged the moral fabric of this country. The issues of euthanasia, genetic engineering and even male pregnancy will challenge the best ethical philosophers. Our role is to determine how leisure lifestyles will be affected by these phenomenon. Interestingly, airlines and movie theatres widening their seats because people's posteriors are getting larger. Secretaries are gaining

more weight on the job because they no longer have to get up from their desks to access files, they simply access files from their computer. Even our youth have suffered from technology. They are among the most physically unfit of the developed countries.

Criminal Justice System

The prisons contain hundreds of thousands of individuals who lack any sense of recreation alternatives. Ethnic minorities for years have not had the recreation alternatives that mainstream American had. Today there are more black males in prison between the ages of 19 and 29 than in our colleges. Most of these individuals enter the prison system with limited knowledge and awareness of the recreation alternatives available to them in the community. A recent newspaper report indicated that a warden in an Indiana town could predict the number of prison cells needed in ten years based on the number of second graders currently attending school in that town. No attention was given to the recreational opportunities available to those second graders. Many inmates are incarcerated because they lack recreational alternatives. Our schools have done little to address the problem of free time in their curriculums. The results are choices that are antisocial.

Employment

Little is known about the leisure attitudes of the unemployed. Tentative evidence suggests that unemployed people tend to reduce the time spent on active, out of the home and social activities and increase their passive, solitary and home based pursuits.

Studies over the last decade have begun to document a link between rising joblessness and various forms of sickness and violence. In areas hit hard by the recession, alcoholism, child abuse, wife beating, suicide and mental illness are reported to be increasing. Many of these behaviors can be viewed as leisure activities.

The most widely circulated work on the relationship between employment, sickness and violence (enforced leisure) comes from Dr. M. Harvey Brenner, a sociologist at John Hopkins University. He reported in 1976 that for each one percentage point rise in unemployment, there would

occur 4.1 percent more suicides over a six year period, 2.3 percent more admissions to mental hospitals for women, 4.3 percent more for men, 5.7 percent more murders, and 1.9 percent more deaths from heart disease, cirrhosis of the liver and stress-related disorders.

Entertainment

The entertainment industry has not shown much discretion to its young audience in terms of nutrition, cigarette smoking, (hip cartoons targeting young blacks) and exercise (couch potato). A member of Congress is currently drafting legislation to curtail the food and drink advertising that bombard Saturday morning television, specifically during the time when cartoons represent 70 percent of the shows aired.

It is no secret that our youth are not physically fit. Couch potato is an apt description. The reasons given for youth sitting at home, are in part, because of high crime in the streets, and the mothers' fear of kidnappers, muggers and rapists abducting their children.

Sixty percent of the audience for American horror movies are black and Hispanic teenagers. Fairfield Research, which conducts nationwide marketing studies on home videos reported:

> Black Hispanic teenagers who experienced violence in their homes and in drug warfare zones that pass as neighborhoods are the people who get the biggest thrill out of horror. Horror films are the cinemas of the disenfranchised.

Youth watch an average of seven hours of TV everyday. There are studies indicating that up to about 10 hours of TV viewing a week correlates with improved school achievement, while more viewing time correlates with lower achievement. The rate of violent acts during prime time has remained stable between five and six an hour. There were 5.9 violent acts and hour in prime time 1967 compared to 6.2 in 1988. In prime time, 70 percent of network programs use violence. During children's hours, 90 percent of the programs are violent.

During the past three years more than 25 violent acts an hour were committed during daytime children's programming. The trend is more

toward cartoon violence. The rate for weekend daytime children's programs was 18.6 violent acts an hour before 19480 and 26.4 violent acts an hour after 1980. According to the Neilson index, American children see an average of 18,000 television murders before graduating from high school, children ages 2 to 11 watch 27.3 hours of television a week.

Family

In the past, schools and churches played a key role in fostering moral development. Now with religious influence in decline and schools wavering over the way to teach values, parents are pretty much on their own. Many of today's parents were raised in the 60's, the age of permissiveness. Their children were born in the age of affluence, the 80's when materialism was rampant. Lickona, a Professor of Education at State University of Cortland New York, states that:

> The adolescents most likely to follow their consciences rather than give into peer pressure are those who few up in authoritative homes, where rules are firm but clearly explained and justified - as opposed to authoritarian homes (where rules are laid down without explanation) or "permissive homes".

The adage that families who play together stay together, if true, would still be met with the challenge of parents who simply would not have time to play. Parents spend roughly 17 hours of interaction per week with their children, 15 minutes of quality time per day, four minutes of quality time with their spouses and 30 seconds of quality time with their children.

Moral development can be initiated in the home by providing structure and enforceable rules. It can also be enhanced by recreation professionals. A necessary starting point in relating moral development to recreation is adherence to rules and games and sports. Within the context of the leisure system, children first learn social and conventional behaviors, e.g. behaviors which conform to prescribed social norms and are intended to maintain social organization. Moral behavior involves a more complex set of responses including the welfare of others, right and wrong etc.

By the time today's children are seven or eight, they have been through more than the previous generation's children went through in their lifetime. Single parent dating has caused additional problems for youth. With the rise in the rate of divorce and single parents, children a being exposed to a new phenomenon - that of seeing their parents as sexual beings who date and have different romantic partners. The result is a growing sexual precociousness among young children.

There are fewer tomboys. Childhood is getting shorter and there are fewer outlets for children. Children are growing more sedentary; fantasy play may be their only creative outlet (the mind is the cheapest playground).

Religion

The churches have long been a force in the development of ethics and morality, but recent times have shown a decline in the influence of the church. As a result youth have sought other avenues, for example, the occult, satanism, high risk activities, obsessed runners, drugs, death as a leisure pursuit, and autoerotic asphyxiation.

Approaches

How we define the problem determines the approach. We must accept social responsibility and recognize that today's youth are different from any youth in the history of this country. Eric Hofer stated:

> In a time of drastic change, it is the learners who inherit the future. The learned find themselves equipped to live in a world that no longer exists.

The pace of change is occurring much more rapidly today. Obsolescence and change are the only constraints in today's society. The pace of change has increased from thousands of years to milliseconds. The horse was domesticated around 2500 B.C. but the stirrup was not invented until A.D. 500, three thousand years later. Similarly, mail which was once carried by Pony Express may have taken months on horseback to cross the country; today the FAX machine does it in a matter of seconds anywhere in the world. In the past, change took place occasionally and irregularly, in a

few activities or in a few locations. In the earlier centuries a person would usually count on ending his life in the same environment of institution, practices and values in which he began.

The following are some suggestions for recreation professionals:

1. Recognize the responsibility to address the negative aspects of leisure.
2. Recognize the urgency of attending to the at-risk youth problem now.
3. Focus on the role of leisure in society.
4. Examine soft curriculums that only address general recreation programs, and modify them to address the issues of homelessness, crime, at-risk youth etc.
5. Examine leisure education courses and redesign them to address today's problems.
6. Promote leisure lifestyle options consistent with society demands.
7. Avoid obsolescence.
8. Include the under represented in determining new leisure needs.
9. Stop focusing on symptoms and concentrate on problems.
10. Accept our responsibility in the at-risk youth problem.
11. Recognize that prisons are not the answer
12. Re-establish the role of family in our programs.
13. Take a proactive stance against the government.
14. Speak out against advertising that uses Rap and other forms of entertainment to sell alcohol, cigarettes and other harmful consumer products.
15. Address the social leisure impact of technology, the criminal justice system, employment and education.

As recreation professionals, we must recognize our role in these social issues. Too many children today are not experiencing that golden period of freedom before the tensions of the adult world seize them. This is born out of the pretend games that children play these days - games that reflect all of society's ills and concerns. Many experts say that childhood is dead. It was killed by a number of assailants - by a society that did not protect and cherish its youngest members; by a media that hastened the end of the ages of innocence; by a culture that no longer celebrated the joyous rituals of childhood. Although childhood died, the children survived.

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Under pressure program: Using live theatre to investigate adolescents' attitudes and behavior related to drug and alcohol abuse education and prevention.

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Abstract

This paper describes the under Pressure Program, an innovative communication- centered approach designed to involve Chicago public junior and senior high school students in considering the problems and prevention of adolescent substance abuse. The centerpiece of the program is a 30-minute live musical play, Captain Clean which incorporates extensive post performance dialogue and role play to explore the pressures and feelings of adolescents regarding substance abuse. This unique blend of live entertainment and applied learning techniques enables adolescents to understand the pressures they face and teaches them to make responsible choices, in addition to serving as a vehicle for effective school and community substance abuse intervention. By going beyond the 60 second "just say no" television and radio campaigns, the Under Pressure Program addresses the underlying causes of adolescent substance abuse. Students are engaged in active participation rather than the traditional "teach and preach". The goals of the program are (1) to evaluate the effectiveness of live theatre, via post performance dialogue and role playing, in soliciting feedback from adolescents as to their own feelings about substance abuse and using school counselors and other available resources, and to build upon their recommendations for improving substance abuse prevention and intervention programs. The program is targeted at predominantly minority, low-income students who have been identified as "high risk". The Under Pressure format consists of four integral parts: faculty/staff

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community in-service; theatrical performance (Captain Clean) post performance dialogue and role play; and student, faculty, counselor, and community follow-up.

Introduction

Alcohol and other drugs have drastically permeated our society. Throughout adolescents school careers, and indeed their lives, most will be faced with many drug-related decisions, that is, whether to abstain or to use alcohol and other drugs, and if they choose to use them, determine the liabilities and consequences; how to behave in potentially drug-related decisions, that is, whether, to abstain or to use alcohol and other drugs, and if they choose to use them, determine the liabilities and consequences; how to behave in potentially drug-related situations such as attending or hosting a party, riding with someone who has been drinking, or dealing with a friend or relative who is chemically dependent; and eventually voting on laws related to alcohol and other drugs. The goals of an effective alcohol and drug education program are clear: to help adolescents develop the confidence needed to foster refusal skills, and to provide assistance in developing communication skills. Given that the school is one of the single most important facets of adolescents' social system, it should be utilized to impart critical information. The Under Pressure Program incorporates this philosophy through the dynamic combination of a high-quality artistic presentation and applied learning techniques. This unique blend enables adolescents to understand the pressures they face and teaches them to make responsible choices.

The program is targeted at predominantly minority, low-income, Chicago elementary, junior and senior high schools students who have been identified as "high risk". The design of the Under pressure Program incorporated this philosophy through a collaborative agreement between Loyola University of Chicago, Loyola University Center for Children and Families, and the Chicago-based not for profit Music Theatre Workshop. Funding was made possible through a 1990-93 grant awarded to the Centre for Children and Families from the United States Dept of Education Drug-Free Schools and Communities Program/Demonstration Grants to Institutions of Higher Education.

The centerpiece of the Under Pressure Program is an original, professionally scripted 30-minute live musical play, Captain Clean, which

features singing, dancing, and contemporary music specifically designed to enhance the action of the play. The play concentrates on the difficult choices made by the young characters, who are challenged by school stresses, peer pressure, and failed family relationships. Their situations are familiar to adolescents of all socioeconomic, racial, and ethnic backgrounds. Secondary issues often coinciding with adolescent substance abuse are also addressed, including teenage pregnancy, gang involvement, male-female relationships, and dysfunctional family structures.

The nonthreatening format of the professional theatrical performance is followed immediately by 90 minutes of discussion and role playing - the crucial segment in addressing alcohol and drug abuse. Students are engaged in active participation rather than the traditional "teach and preach" format of television and radio. The result is an increase in adolescent knowledge, an understanding of the choices they face, and an increased repertoire of problem solving and social skills needed for making appropriate decisions regarding drug and alcohol abuse. Using the play as a springboard for dialogue, the teenage audience and the Loyola University Center for Children and Families professional staff explore the pressures of drug and alcohol abuse. Pre and post-performance support is provided for the adolescents, teachers, counselors, and community representatives by a psychologist from the Center. One feature that sets the program apart from traditional medial techniques is that it is interactive: it takes place in the intimacy of a classroom where the social learning model is implemented, confronting problems that the adolescents must discuss and solve together.

Under Pressure Program

Faculty, Staff and Community In-Service

Prior to the play and post performance discussion, an in-service is conducted by a Center specialist. This is to acquaint faculty, counselors, administrators, and community representatives with the program format and prepare them for a wide range of student reactions. If these participants indicate a specific need, post performance discussion and role playing are directed toward that issue (ie gang pressures or family related drug/alcohol abuse).

Theatrical Performance (Captain Clean)

The centerpiece of each program is a 30 minute live contemporary musical play covering drug and alcohol abuse. It is usually presented in a

week-long residency at the host Chicago school and consists of eight performances with 35-50 adolescents in attendance per performance.

Post performance Discussion and Role Play

The post performance role playing and discussion pick up where the play leaves off by initiating a discussion of drug use as it relates to family, school and self-esteem. A counseling psychologist from the Center who is trained in child development, crisis counseling, and adolescent behavior disorders, leads the actors and adolescents in the discussion and role-playing exercises. The students' acceptance of the actors as contemporaries enables them to delve into their attitudes and feelings about drug and alcohol abuse.

The program is based on the students' participation, both physically and intellectually. The post performance discussion takes place in a circle, with student volunteers engaging in role play. Unlike creative drama improvisations, the action of the role play does not stem entirely from the students; they do not make up the plot or invent the characters. Instead, they are guided through a series of events in which they have a specific role and can influence what happens next. The role play is carefully geared to the students' intellectual level and experience. The theatrical elements are a means, not an end in themselves - providing a plot,, suspense, dramatic climax, and characterization. The actor-teachers usually stay in character throughout, helping the students solve the various problems they encounter in the course of the "plot". The role playing activities enable the adolescents to learn and practice social and decision-making skills. Since the actors stay in character during the discussion period, the students are given the opportunity to question the actual character about his/her ideas and actions.

Student, Faculty, Counselor and Community Follow-up

All participants receive information regarding school approve local counseling and social service agencies in addition to approved hot-line numbers. At the conclusion of the program, adolescents are encouraged to continue ongoing discussion in their classrooms or with their school counselor. If adolescents choose to use a lot-line or agency resource, they are advised to investigate a number of agencies until they find one that provides appropriate help.

Review of the Research

The use of mass media is often viewed as critical for providing information, changing attitudes, and modifying behavior in large numbers of people. In the past several years, there has been an increasing interest among educators in the role of the media in deglamorizing drug abuse, reinforcing non drug-taking behavior, and promoting appropriate use of illicit drugs. According to Flay (1986) a historical cycle is evident in the beliefs about the power of mass media to induce behavioral change. Yet many scholars reject the view that the media succeed in changing knowledge, beliefs, attitudes, and behavior.

Hanneman and McEwan (1973) studies the effectiveness of prevention communication. Their main thesis was that public service announcements have tended to be directed toward a heterogeneous audience with nonspecific informational needs. Flay (1986) also asserted that PSA's did not reach those for whom they were intended, and thus could not be expected to be effective. Sobel and Flay (1983) cited research on the conditions under which the media might best be able not only to "hit" the target audience, but also to be most influential. They suggested that the most appropriate role for mass media in preventing substance abuse is to increase the dissemination of approaches found to be effective in such settings as classrooms.

Johnson and Ettema (1982) demonstrated that children who discussed a television show viewed in the classroom evidenced more changes than children who did not discuss it. Flay (1986) emphatically argued that mass media would never be truly effective unless supplemented with complementary school-based programs which afford children the opportunity to thoughtfully discuss a prevention message. Mass media can be used as a major source of intervention; however, by themselves, "mass media programs are usually not as effective" (Flay, 1986).

Bandy and President (1983) provided an overview of the factors that may explain why some prevention advertising campaigns are unsuccessful. They argued for a firm understanding of the media's functions and limitations in communicating prevention messages. Their research emphasized that human communication is complicated, affected by wide-ranging variables, any of which can reduce effectiveness. They concluded that the media are most effective in reinforcing certain behaviors and attitudes. Thus, the most successful health behavior change campaign

aimed at a school population should incorporate mass media within a school curriculum that promotes interpersonal communication.

Mass media programming, according to Flay (1986) when used as a supplement to a school based intervention approach, should reinforce the information and skills being provided. In doing so, dissemination, message effectiveness, and the probability that students and their parents will discuss the content will be increased.

An example of one such school-based program is the use of theatre in education. Redington (1983) acknowledge that playwrights from Sophocles to Brecht have used their plays to convey facts, political attitudes, or moral instruction to their audiences. She cited a recent development in London in which schools utilized the theatre as a teaching medium: "The aim of theatre in education is that presentations in schools should educate, widen pupils' horizons, and lead them to ask questions about the world around them, as well as entertain." One reason for the potency of the theatre in conveying a message on the evils of drug abuse is that students are not just passive recipients of information. Their active participation can vary from becoming involved in a drama session to taking part in a discussion.

Louis Glickman of the Addiction Research Foundation stated that the search for effective alcohol education programming has resulted in an approach that can be labeled unique in the drug education literature. The content does not appear to be different form the "personal choice" message, but what has changed is the medium of the message: the programs are presented via live theatrical performance (Glickman et al., 1983).

Glickman et al. (1983) conducted a study with approximately 1,000 students on the impact of a high school alcohol education program utilizing a live theatrical performance. It was hypothesized that the theatrical program would have a positive impact (when compared to a control group) on the students' knowledge, attitudes, motivation, and behaviors with respect to alcohol. The results of the study were extremely encouraging, and perhaps the most exciting finding was that significant effects on behavior seemed to have occurred for those with the greatest need for change.

Several organizations have used theatre as a vehicle for drug and alcohol prevention. Plays for Living, a division of the Family Service Association of America has developed and sponsored tours of professional

productions addressing a variety of social and health issues, including alcohol problems in the workplace. Small Change Theatre offered a production for the Minnesota Lung Association aimed at deterring smoking in grade schools. Since 1978, the Catalyst Theatre Society in Edmonton has developed several socially oriented productions to acquaint students with lifestyle issues. Theatrical performances have been used to mobilize rural communities in Botswana to resolve social problems, and to help New York teenagers understand complex social and health problems (Davidson, 1977; Kidd & Byman, 1977; Boria et al., Bossio et al., 1978-79).

General Demographics

Based upon the estimated 1986 U.S. Census, as measured by the consolidated metropolitan statistical area, Chicago ranks third in population in the United States with just over eight million people. In Chicago, minority populations have the highest levels of poverty; only 26.4& of the poor are white, while 62.3% are African-American and 11.3% are Hispanic, Asian or Native American (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1993).

The school system in Chicago is particularly besieged by educational problems, crime, and health issues. Among the African-American and Hispanic students enrolled in the city's nonselective high schools approximately 63% of those who enter the ninth grade drop out, and only 21% of those who complete their senior year are reading at or above the national norm (Designs for Change, 1985). Drop-out rates for the class of 1984 as reported by the Illinois State Board of Education, the Chicago Panel of Public School Finance, and Designs for Change were 47.9%, 39.5% and 53% respectively. The typical Illinois student in 1984 had an ACT composite score of 18.7 on a scale of 1-35), while the average Chicago high school student had a composite score of 13.6 (Illinois State Board of Education, 1985; Orfield et al., 1984).

With regard to the overall health of Chicago's poor, a low-income child has half the chance of attaining his/her first birthday when compared to a more affluent child (Lawlor, 1988). Even more alarming is that the greatest health risks for those between the ages of 15 and 24 are homicide, accidents, and suicide. In 1982, homicides represented 64% of the deaths in this age category - the majority attributed to gang activity (Metropolitan Planning Council, 1986).

According to the Chicago Tribune (1986):

> ... lack of contact with middle-class whites and with middle-class blacks who have escaped the inner city has left underclass youths with few role models except drug pushers, gang members, pimps, small-time criminals and unwed mothers.

"The frustration and grimness of life in the ghetto forces young blacks to aspire to these roles" says Pierre de Vise, a Roosevelt University urbanologist. "Young people would prefer to be middle-class people, but that seems so far from reality."

To get away from the depressing reality around them, many in the underclass flee to alcohol and drugs, in particular heroin. Drug use "is one of the leading causes of all our criminal offences," says Sanford Neal, commander of the nearly all-black district on the Far West Side.

Examination of the nature and scope of drug and alcohol abuse among Chicago youths reveals some significant findings. The Alcoholism Center of the Comprehensive Council of Metropolitan Chicago reported that 12% of youths (61,269) use drugs excessively; over 20,000 are alcoholics and 67% (41,417) of those who abuse drugs also abuse alcohol as well. The Youth Service Project Inc., a Northwest Youth Coalition member, reported that its survey of adolescents revealed that 68% considered drug dealing and use a serious problem in their neighborhood, 59% found violent crime a serious problem, and 33% said they personally experienced pressure to join a gang. They also reported that the youths in its substance abuse programs often use marijuana and alcohol, and to a lesser extent cocaine, crack, PCP and acid.

Specific Target Population

The Chicago public school system includes 58 junior and senior high schools. The total elementary and secondary school enrolment is 410,230 with 84.7% representing minorities. During the 19489-90 pilot year, the Captain Clean performance was viewed by a total audience of 8,643 (7,952 youths and 691 adults). Forty seven percent were low income and included 4,174 African American, 2,573 Hispanics, 17,94 white non-Hispanics, and 8 American Indians. The majority of the participants were in Grades 9-12,

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and over 500 were categorized as physically or emotionally handicapped, trainable mentally handicapped, behavior disorder, or learning disabled.

To date, the Captain Clean performance has been presented in six K-8 and seven Grade 9-12 schools including two special schools: Cook County Detention School (correctional) and Bartolome de Las Casas Occupational High School (special education). At each elementary, junior high and senior high school, teachers, counselors, administrators, parents and community representatives have participated as observers, facilitators of post performance discussions and role play, and as points of contact for student counseling.

Method

Subjects

The target population for the funded research is city of Chicago School District No. 299 K-8 and 9-12 students who are predominantly minority, low income and considered "at risk". As of March 11, 1991, pretest data have been collected on 553 students (both experimental and control) and post test data on 278 students (both experimental and control). Anecdotal and observational data from the post performance discussion have been collected on 939 students. The ages of the subjects have ranged from 10 to 21, in Grades 4 through 12. The racial/ethnic distribution of the students to date had been 84% African-American, 9% Hispanic, 3% white and 4% other.

Procedure

Evaluation design. In order to evaluate the effectiveness of the live theatre (Captain Clean) relative to adolescent substance abuse, both qualitative and quantitative research methods are employed. The two goals of the evaluation deal with the objectives - attitudinal and behavioral change.

Instrumentation. Evaluation of attitudinal change requires measures that are sensitive to the nature of the topics covered in Captain Clean. Review of the alcohol/drug abuse literature yielded no instruments appropriate for evaluating program objectives. Consequently, it was necessary to develop an instrument that was indirectly related to the substance abuse issues addressed. Content of the play was carefully outlined to specify the major alcohol and drug abuse issues being treated:

(1) general health concerns, (2) boyfriend/girlfriend relationships, (3) peer/friend relationships, (4) parent/family relationships (5) counseling actions.

Twenty items were designed to measure students' attitudes toward alcohol and drug abuse relative to each area of concern. The response format for each items was agree, disagree and do not know. Ten of the twenty items were positive attitudinal statements and ten were negative. A Likert-type scale was used with +1 assigned to a positive attitudinal response, 0 to an uncertain response, and -1 to a negative response. This resulted in an instrument which yielded a total scale score that could vary from+20 (very positive) to -20 (very negative). All survey instruments collected were reviewed to determine if subjects had difficulty with the format, wording, and clarity. The staff administering the instruments was also instructed to note any perceived difficulties with the instruments. Item analyses were performed and estimates of reliability were calculated using Cronbach's coefficient alpha. Initial estimates from the pilot test were moderate. Based upon the information derived, format and working revisions were initiated. At present, pretest data have been analyzed from 375 students. An estimate of total score reliability using Cronbach's coefficient alpha (.78) is viewed as adequate. The instrument also contains questions concerning students' birth date, sex, ethnic background, and grade in school. The birth date and other demographic information are used for matching a subject's pretest and post test.

Behavioral information is gathered from school counselors and the group facilitator/counselor. Counselors from each of the schools are requested to keep a log documenting referrals and requests for assistance. To make sure the counselors are maintaining the log and documenting appropriate information, they are contacted by evaluation staff at regular intervals.

During the pilot testing sessions, the group facilitator and a trained professional counselor, along with evaluation staff, developed an observation protocol based on the structured group session that follows each play. The topics and number of participants in each discussion are systematically recorded. Other topics of interest are documented following ethnographic procedures employing field notes, which are summarized to yield both quantitative and qualitative information.

Research design. To determine the effects of the program on students' attitudes concerning the previously identified aspects of drug and alcohol abuse, a pre-post test/ experimental-control group design is employed. At each school, the experimental group and a comparable group of students who will not see the play (control group) are identified. Both groups are pretested two weeks prior to viewing the play, and post tested two to three weeks following the play. If a control group cannot be identified within a school, students from other schools with similar demographic characteristics who have not viewed Captain Clean are selected. Data are gathered on a similar time frame for these schools.

The behavioral effects are evaluated using qualitative, descriptive techniques. High school counselors record relevant information on project activities. In addition, behavioural interactions are documented during the group session following the play.

Data analysis. Standard ANOVA/ANCOVA procedures are employed to determine statistically significant differences. Appropriate post hoc procedures follow statistically significant results. SPSS-X 4.0 and SAS are utilized for the analyses.

Results

Results are discussed according to the stated goals and objectives of the research design.

One goal of the program is to evaluate the effectiveness of live theatre in preventing and intervening in adolescent substance abuse. A program objective is to measure the difference in immediate attitude change on a standardized questionnaire, following the live theatre performances, through the use of a pretest/post test design with 10% (1,000) students of the classrooms participating in the program matched with classrooms of nonparticipants.

Tables 1 and 2 display the results of the analysis of variance for the pretest scores and analysis of covariance for the post test scores. The control group's mean score (14.7) at pretesting was significantly higher than that of the experimental group (11.3). Consequently, analysis of covariance with the pretest as the covariate was run on the post test scores. Table 2 indicates that the covariate was statistically significant, and that there

were no significant differences between experimental and control groups at post testing. The control group, although displaying a significantly more positive attitude than the experimental group at pretesting, demonstrated no attitudinal change at the post test. The experimental group, after viewing the play and participating in the discussion session, demonstrated a significantly more positive attitude at the post test than at the pretest. Further statistical analysis showed that the experimental group displayed positive attitudinal growth, while the control group demonstrated no change. Although preliminary, these results indicate the Under Pressure Program is effective in producing immediate attitude change as measured on a standardized questionnaire.

A second goal is to examine the effectiveness of live theatre, via post performance dialogue and role playing, in soliciting feedback from adolescents as to their own feelings about substance abuse and using school counselors and other available resources. One program objective is to increase the rate of self-reporting of adolescents' feelings and attitudes about substance abuse, as measured by responses on a standardized questionnaire, immediately after observing Captain Clean.

A brief questionnaire was completed by each student immediately following the Captain Clean performance. The primary source of information obtained from this instrument was the number of students indicating a positive reaction to the performance by requesting counselling immediately afterwards. To date, out of 939 questionnaires, 178 requests for counseling have been recorded. Thus, approximately 19% of the students participating in the theatrical presentation were not only willing to express their feelings through discussion and questionnaire, but also were motivated to request further counseling.

Table 1

Tests of Significance for Total Pretest Attitudinal Scores

Source of Variation	SS	DF	MS	F	P
Within Cells	12957.88	38	34.10	22.11	.000
Group (Exp., Control)	753.92	1	753.9		

Table 2

Tests of Significance for Total Post test Attitudinal Scores

Source of Variation	SS	DF	MS	F	P
Within Cells	163.96	33	4.97		
Regression	120.82	1	120.82	24.32	.000
Group (Exp Control)	3.46	1	3.46	.70	.410

Other program objectives are: to identify adolescents' self-reported attitudes about peer influence on substance abuse, as indicated on a standardized questionnaire, immediately following Captain clean; to identify adolescents' self-reported use of school counselors in regard to substance abuse, as indicated on a standardized questionnaire, immediately following Captain Clean; and to identify adolescents self-reported use of parents and community agents in regard to substance abuse, as indicated on a standardized questionnaire, immediately following Captain Clean.

Results were obtained through field notes recorded by the counselor, who acted as a participant-observer in the theatre performance and discussion. The counselor recorded information derived from students' behaviors displayed during the performance and group discussion.

Over 1,000 students from nine high schools have been observed by the counselor. Information derived from the counselor's field notes is summarized below.

Peer influences. Both males and females consistently indicated that it is difficult to withstand peer pressure to engage in substance abuse. Females specifically expressed difficulty in withstanding the pressure exerted by their boyfriends. Most adolescents indicated that friends should not manipulate each other to use drugs or alcohol, although many had experienced such behavior. Most adolescents were unable to explain how they could help friends who were abusing alcohol or drugs other than by talking to them or getting other friends to talk to them.

Family influences. Family issues involving substance abuse appeared to generate much discussion, although adolescents said that these were difficult to discuss. In all discussion groups, the point was made

that when a family member is having a substance abuse problem, it is very difficult to seek help outside the family. Although adolescents consistently expressed the desire to help a drug-abusing family member, several expressed helplessness when confronted with family-related drug problems. Seldom did an adolescent indicate that he or she would discuss a family member's drug problem with anyone outside the family.

Seeking help. Although family members, teachers, and counselors were discussed as sources of help, adolescents expressed reluctance to seek help when confronted with a drug problem. On occasion, members of their extended families were mentioned, as were teachers and counselors (although issues of trust were cited) and abstract sources of information such as "the lord" or "some 800 numbers of hot line." Although few specifically mentioned school counselors as sources of help, approximately 19% of the adolescents requested counseling in writing the questionnaire after the theatrical performance.

Overall, most adolescents expressed some feelings or described experiences during the discussions. The most active discussions were generated around issues involving family members, with 50% to 90% of the adolescents participating. Thus, summaries of the field notes indicate that the live theatre presentation, with subsequent discussion and role play, does solicit feedback in regard to the adolescents' feelings about substance abuse and using school counselors and other resources available to them.

Conclusion

There is no doubt that theatre provides an exciting form of teaching. The under Pressure Program seems capable of doing what the school curriculum and many teachers cannot, that is, involve the students, interest them in the topic of substance abuse, lead them to see its relevance to the world around them, and motivate them to learn more. Captain Clean invariably serves as a springboard for meaningful dialogue in post performance group discussion. Students identify with particular characters, accept the characters' point of view, feel they can discuss things with them, and care what happens to them. This empathy is often used to make the students aware of the moral problems associated with alcohol and drug abuse. Thus, the program appears to be having success in motivating students to understand an important message at a time when the educational system is being criticized for failing to do exactly that.

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Adventure family therapy: An innovative approach answering the question of lasting change with adjudicated youth?

Michael A. Gass

Abstract

The purpose of this article is to outline how the field of adventure family therapy has emerged as a means to answer the issue of constructing lasting functional change for troubled youth. In accomplishing this task, an overview of why adventure therapy may be effective with therapeutic populations first presented, followed by the five various formats of adventure family therapy that are currently being practised. Various stages in adventure family programs are also highlighted along with future issues and trends for the field.

Introduction

One of the greatest needs in our society is the production of functional community members. While some people progress through adolescence in a manner that results in this goal, others find varying degrees of difficulty in this process and as a result, find themselves "lost" in our society. Many times these adolescents are labelled as being "at-risk" and are predisposed to higher levels of juvenile delinquency, nonattendance in school, sexual behavior problems (e.g., teenage pregnancy), drug abuse, personal disturbances, academic underachievement, and vocational problems (Cartledge & Milburn, 1995); all of which have tremendous emotional, financial, and other negative ramifications for the youth and society in general.

There is great pressure on society to find methods that will help these individuals. In the searching for solutions to this answer, it seems that there are a variety of factors that contribute to the problems

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confronting at-risk youth. In fact, many of these factors work together to produce a negative and dysfunctional cycle where at-risk youth end up possessing a long history of failure in traditional learning/living environments. The need for integrative approaches to produce functional and healthy changes, that strives to seek integration with the youth's entire support system, often holds the answer to reversing this dysfunctional cycle.

Within the past 20 years, adventure therapy programs have emerged as a possible answer in dealing with the issues associated with troubled youth. With this development a number of of written sources defining the field's methods (e.g., Gass, 1993; Schoel, Radcliffe, & Prouty, 1988), describing its applications (e.g., Cole, Erdman, & Rothblum, 1994; Davis-Berman & Berman, 1994; Gerstein, 1994) and demonstrating its effectiveness (e.g., Gillis & Simpson, 1990; Wichman, 1990) have emerged.

Gass (1993) has summarized seven reasons why adventure therapy can be successful with troubled youth. These reasons include:

1) Therapeutic processes are centered in action-oriented experiences - Adventure therapy turns passive therapeutic analysis and interaction into active and multidimensional experiences. It augments the didactic and verbal processes of "talking" therapies with concrete physical actions and experiences, having clients' "walk" rather than merely "talk" their behaviors.

2) Therapy is conducted in an unfamiliar environment - In order to overcome clients' resistance to change, adventure therapy places participants in situations that are new, unique, and simplified. Such dynamics create a "contrasting environment" (Walsh and Golins, 1976) where clients can gain new and more functional perspectives.

3) Adventure therapy centers on producing a climate of functional change through the positive use of stress - Adventure experiences focus on introducing "eustress," or the healthy use of stress, into the client's system in a healthy and manageable manner (e.g., Selye, 1978). This type of stress places individuals into situations where the use of certain positive problem-solving abilities (e.g., trust, cooperation, clear and healthy communication) are necessary to reach desired objectives. Adventure experiences also provide an inherent level of motivation based on clear consequences (i.e., ones that are not arbitrary) for inappropriate behaviors.

4) Adventure experiences can be rich in assessment possibilities - Similar to the psychological theory of "projection," clients' unfamiliarity with adventure experiences can provide rich assessment information for the therapist (e.g., examining life-long behavior patterns, dysfunctional ways of coping with stress, intellectual processes, conflicts, needs and emotional responsiveness). Such material can be valuable for planning treatment interventions and strategies.

5) Adventure experiences are generally conducted in a small group, supportive atmosphere - Adventure experiences are conducted in small groups (e.g., 8-15) so when conflicts arise they can be resolved with positive group interaction (Walsh & Golins, 1976; McPhee & Gass, 1993). Individual desires are be met, but they must be accomplished in association with the needs of the group. A true systemic perspective is taken as group members struggle simultaneously with individual and group needs.

6) Adventure experiences are constructed to be "solution oriented" - In unfamiliar adventure environments, clients are presented with opportunities to focus on their abilities rather than their inabilities. This type of orientation can diminish initial defenses and lead to healthy change when combined with the successful completion of progressively difficult and rewarding tasks. Rather than being resistant in therapy by confronting their problems, clients are challenged to stretch perceived limitations and discover untapped resources, strengths, and solutions. Client efforts are also framed by the therapist to center on the potential to achieve self-empowerment by establishing and maintaining functional interventions.

7) The role of therapist is changed - In adventure experiences, therapists are removed from serving as the central means of functional change by the adventure experience. This shift allows therapists to remain more "mobile" to actively design and frame interventions for specific treatment outcomes.

The informal setting of the adventure experiences may also serve to remove many of the barriers limiting interaction that may exist in other more "formal" therapies. While still maintaining clear and appropriate boundaries, therapists may become more approachable and achieve greater interaction with clients.

Combined with the strengths and successes of the development of adventure therapy has also been some appropriate questions. Probably the most valid of these questions is the issue of the lasting effectiveness of treatment gains. Wichman (1980) coined the term "lollipop syndrome" to describe how some wilderness programs are able to produce functional changes in youth, but unable to maintain these programs when adolescents return to their community.* The U.S. Department of Justice has even furthered this claim, stating that wilderness therapy programs without follow-up in clients' home communities "should be rejected on the basis of their repeated failure to demonstrate effectiveness in reducing delinquency after having been tried and evaluated" (Johnson, 1982, p. 2-77).

One of the central reasons behind the recidivism of youth from wilderness programs are the pressures to revert back to old behaviors once they return from being "successful." As stated by Kimball:

> *Delinquent acts must be seen in the relationship between the individual and the totality of environmental stresses. These pressures include poverty, poor housing, low educational levels, unemployment, cultural conflict, dysfunctional family situations, and child abuse. Most behaviorally disordered youth are depraved because they are deprived and the power of a 150' rappel often fades in light of this." (p. 153)*

One promising strategy to counter this issue of lasting effectiveness are the efforts to construct functional change within the "system" or context where the adolescent will return after completion of the adventure therapy experience. One such approach is the construction and implementation "adventure family therapy programs." The goal of such programs is to focus on changing the family system so that when adolescents return to their family setting they can maintain functional change.

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* In this metaphoric description, Wichman (1980) likens the treatment of youth in adventure therapy programs. His description is "Unlike most children, there are some who have never experienced a lollipop. If you give these children a lollipop once or twice, they know what lollipops taste like and may even grow fond of them. Then these children go back to their lollipopless world. They will be all the worse for this experience since they may now want lollipops and do not have them.

The purpose of this paper is to present an overview of the various formats of adventure family therapy that can be implemented for troubled youth as a prevention or treatment program. It also will highlight how the use of adventure family therapy can produce the gains of adventure therapy programs, yet implements a systemic perspective to insure such gains are maintained.

Types of Adventure Family Therapy Programs

Expanding on efforts conducted by Gillis, et al. (1991) and Ringer (1993), five related formats of adventure therapy programs can be found. These programs can be classified, in increasing order of complexity and psychological depth, as: (1) Recreational, (2) Educational, (3) Enrichment, (4) Adjunctive Therapy, and (5) Primary Therapy. These formats are not mutually exclusive, nor is one preferred over the other. Each should be selected based on the needs of the troubled youth, the goals of the participating families and the level of training of the service provider. Each of these formats will be discussed, highlighting sample programs for each.

1. Recreational Programs

Using adventure experiences merely for "re-creating" a positive state of being can have beneficial effects for a family. There are several qualities inherent in adventure experiences (e.g., intense yet enjoyable focuses needed to complete tasks, the ability to accomplish novel and seemingly impossible tasks, associated emotional release, productive social interaction) that can make participation in these activities highly enjoyable. Rohnke (1989) probably depicts this concept best through his acronym of F.U.N.N., (or functional understanding not necessary). Families enjoying one another through positive interaction can provide enriching qualities often missed through the daily needs of meeting family needs. As described by Gillis, et. al. (1989) this programs using this format are often structured as "one time experiences," under a "family day" or family hour theme. The goal of such programs is for families to enjoy their time together and leave with a "good" feeling.

2. Educational Programs

Educational programs retain the "open-ended" nature of recreational programs, but include debriefing processes commonly found following most adventure experiences. The focus of these sessions would be to highlight

what worked and what did not for participants during the adventure experience, allowing them to choose whether or not to incorporate such learnings into their lives outside of the adventure experience.

Roland and Hoyt (1984) developed an adventure program focused on family issues where one or more members were disabled. The program consisted of a weekend of adventure activities followed by weekly meetings to help integrate positive changes made while participating and debriefing the activities. Green (1992) developed a two day program focused on educating families about their patterns and structure around issues of diabetes management.

3. Enrichment programs

Using many of the objectives of the recreational and educational formats, this form of adventure family therapy focuses on certain skills or "themes" beneficial to all families. Common topical areas are communication, problem-solving, trust, goal setting, and appropriate cooperation. Adventure experiences are selected for use based on their ability to relate, or be "isomorphic (Gass, 1991, 1993) to these particular areas. Adventure programming takes on much more of a "prescriptive" quality than earlier styles, while still retaining the general nature of the particular theme.

The "Family Challenge" program (Clapp & Rudolph, 1990), a multi-family (3-4 families) program, used a 1:1 family to staff ratio and grouped families together according to common issues (e.g., problem solving abilities, general functioning skills, reframing abilities, appropriate appraisal). Jacobson (1993) used a multi-family program to enhance family relations.

4. Adjunctive therapy programs

This format seeks to augment established treatment goals through the use of adventure experiences. While not an "end in themselves," adventure experiences are designed around specific treatment issues that the clients bring to the experiences and will most likely continue to address when the adventure experience is completed. Adventure experiences are merged with more "traditional" therapeutic practices, and often are used to provide a differing perspective or "breakthrough" experience that will result in a higher functioning client.

Creal and Florio (1986) described a "Family Wilderness Program" that operates with families of adjudicated delinquent adolescents from a Department of Children and Youth Services psychiatric hospital in Connecticut. Bandoroff (1992) developed an adjunctive program titled "The Family Wheel." This program was conducted at the end of a 21-day wilderness therapy program for adjudicated adolescents. Therapy was constructed around four "theme" days of repair, trust, communication, and negotiation. Gillis & Simpson (1992) designed "family weekends" for chemically youth and their families.

5. Primary therapy programs

In this format, the adventure experience as the primary therapeutic medium for constructing change. This format takes into account the specific needs of the particular family with the adventure experience serving as the primary agent for constructing change. Gillis, et. al., (1991) suggest the following elements of a primary therapy intervention with adventure family therapy:

"(1) the goal(s) of the therapist are to make a lasting systems change in the family using adventure activities as a primary therapeutic modality,

(2) the level of assessment done prior to the family therapy experience attempts to narrow the focus to specific family issues,

(3) the framing done prior to participating in a naturally isomorphic adventure activity is therapeutically intense,

(4) the sequencing of isomorphic activities by the therapist is focused in order to achieve lasting systems change in the family, and

(5) the debrief is used by the family adventure therapist to punctuate the metaphor or reframe inappropriate interpretations of the experience (i.e., the primary therapy has taken place while participating in the activity)" (p. 36).

The case example highlighted in several publications (e.g., Gillis, and Gass, 1993; Gass, 1993) represents one example of primary adventure family therapy. In this case, an adventure activity, (i.e., the "trust lean") was framed as an intervention for issues of substance aouse and family violence for a particular family. This therapeutic intervention was conducted in the fifth session of working with this family, based on the family's and therapist's construction of resolving this family's particular issues.

Note that all formats have particular applications for troubled youth. Those described first seem to appear more appropriate for prevention programs, whereas the later stages (e.g., adjunctive and primary therapy) seem more applicable for treatment programs.

Stages of adventure family therapy

Gillis and Gass (1993) outlined five general stages that seem to be used with most adventure therapy experiences to create functional change for troubled youth and their families. These areas are: (1) Assessment, (2) Structuring, (3) Intervention, (4) Debriefing, and (5) Follow-up.

1. Assessment - Critical to the effectiveness of any therapeutic intervention for troubled youth is the ability to identify client needs based on an appropriate means of assessment. Assessment for adventure therapy programs can be obtained through traditional methods or through the actual use of adventure experiences. Adventure experiences can serve as valuable assessment tools because of the unfamiliarity that most clients have with these activities. Because of this, clients often project a clear representation of their behavior patterns, personality, family interaction patterns, and interpretation into the activities (Kimball, 1983).

2. Structuring - Based on the assessment of the youth's and family's needs, adventure experiences are structured to target functional change during the actual adventure experience. The same adventure experiences may vary from one family to the next because of the need to adapt activities to specific treatment objectives. There is no "one standard format" for conducting each experience, but there are some specific guidelines for therapists to use in structuring these experiences in order to help families focus on specific issues and resulting behavior change.

Gass (1991) developed a seven step model outlining a sequential process adventure therapists can use in creating the actual "structure" of adventure experiences. These steps are: (1) state and rank the goals of the therapeutic intervention based on the assessment of the clients' needs, (2) select an adventure experience that possesses a strong metaphoric relationship to the goals of therapy, (3) identify how the experience will have a different successful ending/resolution from the corresponding real life experience, (4) adapt the framework of the adventure experience so participants can develop associations to the concepts and complexity of the

experience, (5) design the structured metaphor to be compelling enough to hold participants' attention without being too overwhelming, (6) make minor adjustments to highlight isomorphic connections during the adventure experience (e.g., appropriate reframing, punctuation), and (7) use appropriate processing techniques following the experience to reinforce positive behavior changes (e.g., reframe potentially negative interpretations of experience, focus on the integration of functional change into the client's lifestyle).

3. Interventions - Once adventure activities are structured in the intended manner, the adventure experience is conducted to achieve the appropriate intervention. The role of the therapist during the intervention is to guide the family through the experience, emphasizing key points they make in their decision making process through techniques that are often used by family therapists during other types of interventions (e.g., punctuation, reframing, anchoring, circular questioning, the use of paradoxical techniques).

4. Debriefing - Following an intervention activity, adventure therapists focus varying degrees of attention on debriefing the dynamics of what occurred in the activity. The purpose of debriefing is: (1) to enhance the therapeutic value of the adventure experience through heightened client awareness and (2) to increase the positive transfer of functional therapeutic change for clients' future use. Debriefing techniques are generally verbal in format, but can often take on the form of non-verbal strategies (e.g., sculpting, journal writing).

Borton (1970) offers one of the simplest formats for debriefing adventure experiences through the three progressive questions of: (1) what happened?, (2) so what?, and (3) now what? The "what" of the discussion asks clients to revisit their actions and interactions in a non-judgmental manner to increase clients' understanding of what actually occurred. This can be particularly valuable for families in adventure activities since some members are "left out" of certain decisions on what occurred or some members of the family become so involved in the dynamics of their interactions that they become oblivious to the actions of others. The "so what" asks the clients to examine the consequences and ramifications of what occurred in the experience. Examination of this area often leads to a deeper understanding of behavior patterns that led to various actions in the activity. This is particularly relevant for family adventure programs, where the discovery and examination of these patterns provides an

important source of information for family members to change. The "now what" stage focuses on building from the two previous debriefing stages. It asks client to examine their behavior patterns and make decisions on what they wish to change or keep the same in future interactions. This final stage obviously has strong focus on transferring learnings from adventure experiences to future interactions for the family. As stated by Gass (1991), the success in reaching and implementing this stage in therapy often determines the lasting effectiveness of an adventure therapy experience.

5. Follow-up - Once positive changes have been integrated into the family system from the adventure experience, there is a need to implement methods of reinforcing these changes to prevent the re-occurrence of negative behaviors and the ability to adapt to new conflicts. As stated earlier, adventure therapy programs without follow-up experiences lack the strength of interventions with these experiences.

Follow-up experiences can consist of actual adventure experiences or methods that enable the family to re-visit critical portions of their adventure experiences (e.g., through reflection). One of the best methods of follow-up techniques for adventure therapists is to use key phrases or critical portions from the adventure experience in traditional therapy sessions.

Future areas of consideration

Two critical areas have been identified by Gillis and Gass (1993) that should be addressed in the use of adventure family therapy with troubled youth. These areas are: (1) treatment considerations and (2) therapist training issues.

1. Treatment considerations - Several existing family therapy approaches may be integrated with adventure activities. Gass (1991) has outlined how adventure strategies integrate into strategic and structural approaches. Gillis and Bonney (1986) and Gerstein and Rudolph (1989) have documented the use of strategic approaches for adventure curriculum. Gillis and Bonney (1989) have outlined how adventure activities can fit within a psychodrama format and Mason (1987) has acknowledged the influence of experiential therapies (e.g., Whitaker) in her work. Further exploration is needed to explore when and how adventure experiences fit with family therapy approaches. It is possible that the selection of which

family framework to use will depend upon specific client needs rather than on one "correct" theoretical answer.

It is also unclear how adventure activities integrate most appropriately into therapeutic processes with troubled youth. Questions that should be used to decide this issue include: (1) determining what adventure family therapy format works best with troubled youth in prevention and treatment programs, (2) identifying the circumstances when adventure techniques are contraindicated for troubled youth, and (3) targeting particular activities that work best with particular family structures (e.g., single parent families, foster care placements) to produce lasting effects.

2. Training issues - The training of professionals also raises several questions. Therapists using adventure experiences or specific adventure techniques should realize they need additional competency in marriage and family therapy to develop high levels of treatment efficacy. As highlighted by Gillis and Gass (1993):

> *"While there are very similar concepts between some therapeutic approaches and the presentation of adventure activities (e.g., metaphor development, assessment/ diagnostics, enactment, and action-oriented therapy), the concepts of both approaches need to be taught in an integrated manner. There is a need for training programs which address this "cross training" issue and envision the integration of adventure and marriage and family therapy fields as achieving a level of intervention greater than either field can achieve separately. It is deceptively simplistic to think that having been trained in either field exclusively qualifies one to add the other field without sufficient preparation" (p. 283).*

Caution is warranted for adventure programs who feel they can simply "add on" family therapy components in an idiosyncratic manner. The profession must take responsibility for providing and nurturing training programs that will lead to the "cross-training" of professionals (i.e., the need for professionals to be trained in both adventure therapy and marriage and family therapy approaches with troubled youth). Other means of program development (e.g., peer reviews and program accreditation;

Williamson & Gass, 1993) may also provide avenues for furthering the implementation of adventure family therapy programs with troubled youth.

Summary

Adventure therapy has been criticized, sometimes appropriately, as failing to provide lasting therapeutic change for troubled youth. Various initiatives to remedy this problem have been implemented, one the most promising being the concept of adventure family therapy. Based on the positive elements of adventure experiences, this approach takes a systemic perspective in creating conditions where beneficial changes will continue to last through a reconstructed, supportive family environment. While many questions remain, the inclusion for such an approach in the treatment of troubled youth seems to address the very foundation of preventing youth into spiralling from even further levels of dysfunction. The consequences of not implementing such an approach has usually led to a further taxing of supporting social agency resources and the need of even more expensive treatment programs.

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Adolescent female offenders: Program parity is essential to meeting their needs

Ilene R. Bergsmann

Small numbers and limited fiscal resources have contributed to the lack of attention paid to the needs of juvenile female offenders, particularly those in secure facilities. This article will identify who the typical adolescent female offender is, provide the results of a survey of the educational services she receives, and describe innovative programs designed to help her become economically and emotionally self-sufficient.

The typical adolescent delinquent female is 16, has been abused sexually and/or physically or has been exploited, has to finished high school, and lives in the inner city. She has probably experienced placement in foster care, uses drugs, and lacks work and social skills to find and maintain employment above the subsistence level. About half are black and Hispanic.

Twenty-six percent of these young women are educationally disadvantage (Bergsmann 1988). With most female offenders lagging two to four years behind their age group academically, they face major barriers in developing educational skills that are the foundation for economic independence.

According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics report Children In Custody 1975-85 (Kline 1989), the number of females held in public facilities declined by 37 percent between 1975 and 1985, yet the number held in private facilities skyrocketed -- up 121 percent. Most of these girls are in shelter and group homes, although private training schools have seen a 19 percent increase.

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The juvenile justice system continues to be paternalistic toward females, with judges and law enforcement officials determined to care for them and protect them from themselves and others. Parents also are more likely to turn to the justice system when their daughters are out of control. Sons, on the other hand, are merely sowing their wild oats. Yet self-report data show there is little or no difference between females and males in sexual behavior, the number of runaways, or in minor delinquent behavior (Sarri 1983).

Nearly 25 percent of all females held in public facilities in 1987 were there for status offences and abuse and neglect, or were voluntarily committed. Almost another 30 percent committed property crimes; 14 percent violated their conditions of probation; and just under 14 percent were held for violent crimes (Allen-Haven 1988).

Most youthful female offenders have traditional aspirations. They want marriage to a man who will support them and the children they have together. In reality, unless they are willing to achieve their GED and acquire a high-paying skill, they can look forward to bleak years characterized by under-employment and/or unemployment, raising children alone, and living in substandard housing in poor urban neighborhoods.

With an average stay in a training school of less than eight months, it is critical for these youths to develop academic competencies, understand the world of work, learn basic health care, and develop social and life skills. "Very few jobs will be created for those who cannot read, follow directions, and use mathematics," say the authors of Hudson Institute's report Work force 2000 (Johnston and Packer 1987).

Moreover, women and minorities are increasing their representation in the labor force. Minorities will comprise 29 percent of the "net addition" to the labor pool between 1985 and 2000; by 2000, there will be more black women in the work force than black men. Not only are minorities employed at substantially lower rates than whites; they also earn approximately 27 percent less that whites and represent 25 to 36 percent of the poverty population.

Added to these already crippling economic indicators are the risk factors of young women offenders -- poor academic records, high incidence of broken homes, pregnancies, drug abuse, and criminal activity. Unless

correctional staff can help adolescent females break the cycle of poverty, they will continue to be qualified only for low-skill, low-wage trades.

The typical adolescent delinquent female is 16, has been abused sexually and/or physically or has been exploited, has not finished high school, and lives in the inner city.

A survey of state correctional education programs was conducted in 1988 by the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO), eliciting information on the educational programs available to females in training schools. Thirty-two states responded. The results are as follows.

Survey results

Some states understand the importance of introducing juvenile females to the same vocational programs as males, e.g., those that pay wages sufficient to support themselves and their families in order to afford decent housing, medical care, food, and clothing. Many, however, do not.

Vocations that offer the potential for high pay continue to be offered to males more frequently than to females in both the institution and on study release. In 20 states, auto mechanics is offered to males; eight offer it to females. In 11 states, welding is available to males; five offer it to females. And landscape/horticulture is offered to males in 12 states but to females in only seven.

Office education, the most commonly offered program for females, is offered in 21 states; 11 do so for males. Home economics is available to girls in 10 states, in six for boys. Programs such as small engine repair, electronics, carpentry, woodworking, and auto paint and body, while offered in some female facilities, continue to be more prevalent for males. Low-wage, traditional female programs, such as nurse's aide training, are available in greater numbers for females than males.

Most states teach world of work/career awareness to both sexes. All but two states help youths learn to find employment, and all but five teach them how to keep a job.

Health education is a priority for most states in which the same programs are offered to both genders. These programs include sex education,

nutrition and hygiene, and grooming. Substance abuse counseling and pregnancy counseling are also available, the latter in only 15 states for both sexes and in nine only for females.

Unless correctional staff can help adolescent females break the cycle of poverty, they will continue to be qualified only for low-skill, low-wage trades.

Life skills classes appear to be less important than career awareness and health education, and are more gender-biased. Nine states do not teach family living classes and in two states, it is only given to females. Child care and parenting skills are available in 24 and 26 states, respectively, but each includes three states where only females participate in the classes. Of the 24 states that offer home maintenance, two do so only for females. Law-related education is taught in 20 states, but in three states, only males take the class and in one state, only females do so. Budgeting and finance is the most widely available course, offered in 29 states.

Sharing Resources

Because of budgetary restraints, administrators must make difficult decisions about the most appropriate use of resources. The CCSSO survey found that, in 17 of the 32 states responding to the survey, lack of adequate funding is the primary reason for not providing equitable programs for females. It appears that because resources are limited, decisions are made to use them where they will have the greatest impact, i.e., on the males.

Administrators also make decisions based on the small numbers of females, the second reason given for not providing equitable programs. These arguments, however, have failed to find support among the courts when adult women offenders have brought suit based on lack of program parity with male offenders. There is no reason to believe they could withstand a similar legal challenge should juvenile females sue.

Resources within corrections may be limited, but there is an array of resources in other state departments, including education, employment and training, social services, and mental health. Correctional educators should not be expected to provide the full range of educational services these young women require without assistance from governmental resources. Yet many

youth services departments with responsibility for providing education are trying to do just that.

The CCSSO survey found that, while at least monthly interaction with other departments occurs in 14 of the 22 states that operate correctional education programs, in the remaining states, the interaction is limited to less than once a month. Even in those states where there is monthly contact, these contacts may occur only for a single purpose, such as monitoring. In other states, cooperation may exist in one area, such as special education, but is not available in others. Or the state education agency (SEA) may want to focus on training schools but not group homes.

In Massachusetts, the extended day skills training program allows youthful female and male offenders to enrol in state-of-the-art vocational training programs.

Twenty-three SEAs inform departments of youth services (DYS) of available federal funds. In 20 states, the SEA and DYS work jointly to develop policy, although only eight states work together on policies for educational equity. And in only 15 states is equity training for staff provided.

Successful States

There are some states where resources are shared and federal funds found to develop programs. In Massachusetts, the extended day skills training program allows youthful female and male offenders to enrol in state-of-the-art vocational training programs taught by expert instructors. Through a joint venture between the Department of Youth Services and the Department of Education, adjudicated delinquent youths attend these regional vocational centres at the conclusion of the regular school day. And one regional vocational school brings a computer program into the secure facility for girls.

All of the services provided to regular students in Massachusetts are given to delinquents, including an assessment of interest and aptitude, career counseling, and ongoing assistance throughout the youths' enrolment.

Collaboration between the California Department of Education and the Department of the Youth Authority has served to expand programming

at the coed Ventura School in California. A $7,300 grant from the Carl Perkins Vocational Education Act is used to support the staff Gender Equity and Single Parent Committee. The committee, which meets monthly, uses its sex equity funds to sponsor programs at the facility.

During its four years, the committee has sponsored an annual job fair for females. The job fair begins with an assembly during which a prominent area professional woman and a former ward address the young women. One former resident who spoke is now a carpenter in southern California and was selected by Volunteers in Parole as Parolee of the Year. Businesses, unions, and other employers set up booths. Some bring their equipment onto the facility grounds.

This year, for the first time, a single parent forum was held for the young women because approximately 30 percent of the female population are parents. Participants included Head Start, AA and A1-Anon, Big Brothers/Big Sisters, Parents Anonymous, and other organizations that can provide residents with resources for assistance when they are released. To promote the forum, the superintendent and the sex equity staff coordinator made a videotape to describe its purpose and agenda. All female residents had the opportunity to watch the videotape in their housing units.

The math/science club is an outgrowth of the Gender Equity and Parenting Committee. The science teacher helps young women overcome their fear of these subjects, meeting several times during the week when they receive assistance and tutoring. The committee also uses its funds to purchase needed materials, for example, buying books for the survival education class. Massachusetts and California are two examples of youth services departments building on existing resources to provide services to adolescent female offenders, services that will help them develop positive self-esteem and the skills to become economically independent.

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Characteristics of Adventure Programs Valued by Adolescents in Treatment

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to determine what characteristics of adventure programs were valued by adolescents in treatment. Subjects of the study included 11 experts in the field of adventure programming and 207 participants in adventure programs at 12 adolescent treatment programs. The experts, through a modified Delphi process, identified valued program characteristics. Program participants indicated that their agreement with these items through a questionnaire administered at the conclusion of their program involvement. Participants and experts were significantly in agreement regarding valued characteristics (r_S = .55, $p<$ .01) though participants did appear, in contrast to the experts, to value items related to "process" more highly than items related to "content". "Helping/assisting others" was the characteristic most supported by participants. Gender and age were significantly related to perceptions of value for several characteristics. Implications of the study for research include the need to further specify findings and to relate them to outcomes. In regard to practice the study the supports that "process" not just "content", needs to be considered in staff training and program implementation.

One medium gaining popularity in adolescent treatment is adventure programming. Adventure programming, as defined in the Experiential Challenge Program (ECP) model (Roland, Summers, Friedman, Barton & McCarthy, 1987), includes a sequence of activities/experiences including goal setting, awareness activities, trust activities, group problem-solving, individual problem-solving, and processing/transfer. Ropes courses are the setting for some activities. Many treatment programs have become involved with building ropes courses and

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initiating adventure programs (Schoel, Prouty & Radcliffe, 1988). The marketing and promotional efforts of treatment programs sometimes focus on adventure programs (Gillis & Simpson, 1991). the proliferation of adventure programs has not, however, been matched with expanded efforts in determining the value of such programs. Specific impacts of participation remain speculative (Gillis, 1992). While adventure program involvement has been linked to a variety of positive outcomes (Witman, 1992), the causes of such changes have not been identified.

The study described in this paper was designed to provide a grounded perspective on what characteristics of the adventure experience are most valued by participants. The rationale for the study was the work of Conrad and Hedin (1982). In their study of experiential education impacts they determined that "the most powerful predictors of (student) growth were the characteristics of the experience" (p. 74). Examples included autonomy and a collegial relationship with adults. Ewert (1987) observed that research in adventure programming needs to move beyond what happens as a result of programs to determining how and why it occurred. Determining salient, valuable characteristics of programming can serve as a blueprint for further research which links characteristics and outcomes. The purpose of this study was to identify valued program characteristics of the adventure experience. The perceptions of experts in adventure programming and of participants in such programs were determined, compared, and analyzed. A variety of adventure program characteristics have bee proposed as valuable to adolescent treatment. The include process characteristics such as limit-setting (Kerr & Gass, 1987), accepting personal responsibility (Kimball, 1983), setting and accomplishing goals (Raiola, 1986) and debriefing which identifies transfer to participants' lifestyles (Jordan, 1987). Content characteristics seen as valuable to treatment have included communication activities (Marx, 1988), cooperative and trust activities (Ziven, 1988), problem-solving experiences (Kimball, 1986), ropes activities (Feed, 1991) and opportunities to help/assist others (Obermeir & Henry, 1989). These assertions of value have neither been developed systematically nor validated by program participants. The intent of this study was to do both.

Method

Subjects of the study include 11 experts in the field of programming and 207 participants in adventure programs at 12 inpatient psychiatric

adolescent treatment programs. The experts, through a modified Delphi process, identified value adventure program characteristics. Program participants indicated their agreement with these items through a questionnaire administered at the conclusion of their program involvement. Analysis of their responses was both descriptive and comparative.

Subjects

A "snowball" (McCall & Simmons, 1969) approach to selecting subjects was employed beginning with those experts and adventure program sites identified in the literature. The initial point of reference for experts was the list of participants from the 1988 Institute on Innovations in Camping and Outdoor Education with Persons Who are Disabled held at Bradford at Bradford Woods Outdoor Center in Indiana. The initial resource for program sites was the directory of the Association for Experiential Education (Goldwasser & Beer, 1985) which focused on special populations. A description of the study was mailed to listed individuals/agencies. Screening and selection occurred among the twenty-two who expressed interest in the study as well as four individuals/agencies who were suggested by these initial contacts. "Informed consent" procedures were completed at all sites.

Criteria for the experts' panel included commitment to the project, a minimum of two years' experience in leading adventure programming with adolescents in treatment and familiarity with the Experiential Challenge Program (ECP) model of adventure programming (Roland et al., 1987). The majority of the experts had received either a master's or doctorate degree with education, recreation, outdoor education or psychology as their field of study. Specialized "adventure" training had been obtained by the majority most often from either Outward Bound or Project Adventure.

The twelve study sites represented all geographic regions in the United States with states in the Southeast most represented. Activities/experiences in the adventure programs at all twelve sites include all of the ECP levels -- goal setting, awareness activities, trust activities, group problem-solving and processing /transfer. All twelve sites considered their program philosophy and practices to be more focused on treatment than on recreation.

Characteristics of the 207 adventure program participants at the twelve study sites included: (a) 56% males and 44% females; (b) varied diagnoses including substance abuse (44.9%), affective disorders (30%), conduct disorders (11.6%), and others (13.5%); and (c) varied age groups including 12-14 (19.8%), 15-16 (50.2%) and 17-19 (30%) year olds. Specific to adventure program participation the majority of participants were involved with programming 10 or more hours and 74.4% attended all scheduled sessions.

Procedures

The experts were asked through a mail survey, to identify through an open-ended response, those 4-10 program characteristics which in their experience had been most valuable for participants. Their responses were refined through two rounds of rating the various characteristics. Those items supported by a majority of experts were redrawn as a questionnaire to be rated by participants.

Prior to the main study two pilots studies were conducted at sites and with subjects similar to those involved with the main study. The first included twelve participants. The intent was to determine how understandable the questionnaire was for adolescents in treatment. The failure of more than half of the participants to complete the rank-ordering of characteristics resulted in revision to simply agreeing or disagreeing with items. The second pilot study involved twenty-one participants at two sites. It establishes the test-retest reliability of the questionnaire as r= .89. These participants responded twice to the questionnaire at both two hours and fifty hours after the completion of an adventure program.

Participants from twelve adventure programs in inpatient psychiatric programs, as detailed in the previous section, were involved in the main study. At the conclusion of the final session of their adventure program experience they identified those program characteristics they found to be valuable.

Analysis

Data generated from the research process were analyzed descriptively and comparatively. Descriptive analysis was utilized to

show the relative level of agreement regarding the value of various program characteristics. The relationship between certain independent variables (gender and age) and the program characteristics was determined using Chi Square comparisons. Additionally, participants' and experts' ranking of the various characteristics were compared through ran-order correlations. While the .05 level of confidence was selected for reporting significance, findings in the .06 to .10 range are reported as approaching significance.

Results

The experts' panel generated more than thirty items when asked to identify the characteristics of adventure programs perceived by adolescents as valuable to treatment. Redundant/repetitive items were combined by the researcher resulting in a list of twenty-five items. Sixteen of these items were supported by the majority (six or more) of experts and were subsequently presented to participants.

Table 1 summarizes participant responses. The percentage of participants citing particular characteristics as valuable ranged from 60.4% for "being a leader" through 92.8% for "helping/assisting others". Analysis of the relationship of perceptions of the value of characteristics to participants gender and age are reported in the sections which follow.

Gender differences approached significance in relationship to the perceived value of four characteristics. Three of these characteristics were more often perceived as valuable by males. These included "being a leader," (Chi Square - 3.41, $p < .06$), "choosing levels of participation and risk," (Chi Square = 3.32, $p< .06$), and "learning from failures" (Chi Square = 3.21, $p< .07$). The item more often perceived as valuable by females was "doing trust activities" (Chi Square = 2.62, $p < .10$).

The relationship of differences in age and perceived value of characteristics was significant (Chi Square = 6.91, $p < .03$) only with "doing ropes course activities" characteristic. Among participants 12-14 years old, 82.9% valued the characteristic. Among the 15-16 age group and the 17+ age group the percentage valuing the characteristic dropped to 73.1% and 59.7%, respectively.

Table 1

Percentage of Participants Citing Particular Program Characteristics as Valuable (N=207)

Characteristic	Percentage
Helping/assisting others	92.8
Taking risks/meeting challenges	89.9
Realizing the importance of caring about self and others	87.4
Getting support of other participants	85.0
Doing trust activities	82.6
Feeling like part of the group	82.6
Setting/accomplishing goals	81.2
Being playful/having fun	78.3
Learning from failures	76.8
Doing problem solving activities	72.9
Having group discussions	71.5
Doing cooperative games/activities	71.5
Doing ropes course activities	71.0
Doing communication activities	62.8
Choosing levels of participation and risk	61.4
Being a leader	60.4

Table 2 provides a comparison of the ranks of program characteristics by participants and experts. A significant, positive correlation of moderate strength ($r_S = .55$, $p = <.01$) was found. Those items on which the participants' and experts' ranks differed most were:

"doing ropes course activities" (ranked 13 by participants, 5.5 by experts)

"Helping/assisting others" (ranked 1 by participants, 8 by experts)

"being playful/having fun" (ranked 8 by participants, 1 by experts)

"setting/accomplishing goals" (ranked 7 by participants, 13.5 by experts)

"being a leader" (ranked 16 by participants, 10 by experts)

"learning from failures" (ranked 9 by participants, 15 by experts)

Table 2

Participants' and Experts' Ranks of Program Characteristics

Characteristic	Rank	
	Participants	Experts
Helping/assisting others	1	8
Taking risks/meeting challenges	2	2
Realizing the importance of caring about self and others	3	7
Getting support of other participants	4.5	3.5
Doing trust activities	4.5	5.5
Feeling like part of the group	6	3.5
Setting/accomplishing goals	7	13.5
Being playful/having fun	8	1
Learning from failures	9	15
Doing problem solving activities	10	10
Having group discussions	11.5	13.5
Doing cooperative games/activities	11.5	10
Doing ropes course activities	13	5.5
Doing communication activities	14	12
Choosing levels of participation and risk	15	16
Being a leader	16	10

Discussion

Findings of the study revealed that adolescents in treatment do view some characteristics of the adventure experience a more valuable

than others. Furthermore, their perceptions of value, while similar, do differ on some characteristics form those of experts in adventure programming. Gender and age also influenced perceptions of some characteristics.

Findings suggested that participants value "process" over "content". Activity items (e.g. doing ropes course activities, doing communication activities) were less valued than items related to the context or process of the program (e.g. taking risks/meeting challenges, getting support of the other participants). The distinction participants made between "process" and "content" characteristics is germane to practice. Specifically, program leaders need to develop their "soft skills" which Swiderski (1987) has defined as "interpersonal and human relations skills; in other words people skills" (p. 31).

He cited examples of such skills as the understanding of group dynamics, building a climate of trust within a group, knowing how to stimulate motivation, and interpreting nonverbal expressions. These social, psychological and communication skills, in contrast to the "hard skills" of adventure program leadership (e.g. administrative, technical or safety skills), are more difficult to teach and evaluate. Nonetheless their integration into staff development activities seems vital. Participants' valuing of process over content is also relevant to agencies and individuals considering adoption of adventure programming with their treatment programs. Contrary to the message of some consultants/entrepreneurs in the field, a fully developed and expensive ropes course may not be a pre-requisite to the initiation of programming particularly with older adolescents. Activities other than the ropes course are perceived as valuable (e.g., trust activities) and process characteristics (e.g. getting/giving support) are not dependent upon it.

Findings regarding gender and age are also of importance to program development and implementation. Finds related to gender seem consistent with reported gender differences in development and affiliation (Miller, 1976; Gilligan, 1982). Females more often supported the value of "trust activities" but were less supportive of several items related to power or dominance. These differences may simply reflect that higher percentages of women in treatment are working on issues related to trust/disclosure (Crane, Henson, Colliver & MacLean, 1988) while males are more often focused on power/ control concerns (Hartmann, Glasser, Greenblatt, Solomon & Levinson, 1968).

In regard to age the perceived value of ropes course participation was lower among older participants. Perhaps the challenge or impact of such courses is diminished as individuals mature. Creation of a more ropes-course-focused adventure group for younger adolescents is perhaps indicated as is consideration of age in any sub-grouping of participants.

An expanded understanding of the various characteristics identified in the study is an important goal for further research. For example, future research could address a characteristic such as "doing cooperative games/activities" with the intent of discovering what participants perceived this characteristic to entail and which specific games or activities were most valued. Beyond knowing what characteristics are valued and what outcomes they produce. Knowledge of these concerns could enhance the diagnostic/prescriptive potential of programs. If, for example, a program leader knew that the ropes course involvement promoted trust, programming for a group particularly deficient in this area might be heavily weighted toward ropes course involvement. The quality of either program or diagnosis centered protocols would be enhanced through this awareness. Adventure programming could better serve adolescents in treatment.

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